

**Narrative for the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE)
FY 2017 Annual Report**
(July 1, 2016 - June 30, 2017)

General Information

WICHE has no administrative staff or director. Administrative support for the agency is provided through staffing at the University of Wyoming.

Agency Contact

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Year Established

The Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education was established by statute in 1953.

Statutory References

Wyoming Statutes, Title 21, Chapter 16, Article 2.

Number of Authorized Personnel

There are three WICHE commissioners appointed by the Governor. In FY 2017, Wyoming's representatives are UW President Laurie Nicholas, Laramie; Representative Fred Baldwin, Kemmerer; and Western Wyoming Community College President Karla Leach, Rock Springs.

Organization Structure

WICHE is a separate operating entity funded by state legislative appropriation. The functions of the agency are performed by personnel within the University of Wyoming under the umbrella of the College of Health Sciences.

Clients Served

WICHE serves Wyoming residents from the undergraduate level through graduate and professional programs.

Budget Information

FY 2017 General Fund Expenditures \$2.2 million.

Meeting frequency

The WICHE Commission meets twice per year.

Mission and philosophy

The mission of WICHE, based upon its enabling legislation, is to provide residents within Wyoming and the other western states within the compact an opportunity to obtain high-quality, cost-effective education without replicating programs in every state.

Major Accomplishments/Efficiencies

The annual report published by the WICHE office is available on the web at: <http://www.wiche.edu>. Wyoming highlights are available at <http://wiche.edu/state-highlights/wyoming>. Through WICHE's Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP), Wyoming sent 112 students to out-of-state programs in 2016-17 in 9 different fields (medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, physical therapy, occupational therapy, optometry, podiatry, osteopathic medicine, and physicians' assistant study). Wyoming sent 56 students to out-of-state institutions via the Western Regional Graduate Program, while receiving 18. 1,181 Wyoming students participated in Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE), attending schools in other WICHE states while 1,543 WUE students attended Wyoming institutions from other WICHE states.

The University of Wyoming is a member of WICHE's the Internet Course Exchange (ICE), an alliance of member institutions and systems that share distance delivered courses among two- and four-year institutions in the 16-state/island WICHE region, the Interstate Passport program to block transfer lower division general education courses, and has recently joined SARA, the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement initiative that will make distance education more effective and accessible.

Wyoming's WICHE PSEP Contract and Payback Program

Wyoming's WICHE PSEP program instituted a contract and payback program for all students entering in 2013 except for those in veterinary medicine. The data regarding the payback program is as follows:

Current statistics:

94 Signed WICHE PSEP Contracts (though 2017) less 1 withdraw
39 graduates (through 2017)
21 Practicing in Wyoming
3 Practicing outside Wyoming
3 Enrolled in specialty residencies
12 Grace period
54 currently enrolled in 27 western professional programs

Wyoming WICHE PSEP contract graduates fields are:

1 Optometry
3 Occupational Therapy
4 Physician's Assistant
12 Physical Therapy

Wyoming WICHE PSEP contract graduates and practice sites:

1 Boulder
2 Buffalo
3 Cheyenne
1 Evanston
1 Evansville
1 Gillette
1 Green River
1 Jackson
1 Laramie
6 Powell
1 Sheridan
1 Wheatland

Feedback:

This program appears to be fulfilling its intended purpose, with 19 healthcare providers returning to Wyoming practice, 3 in residencies, and 12 in the grace period. We expect to see dentists, podiatrists and optometrists returning to the state in larger numbers in the next few years. These are 4-year programs, with a 1-year grace period and the option of residency or fellowship training. Therefore, 2018 is the earliest graduates will be required to return to the state. Medical students must complete residencies of at least 3 years in length after 4 years of medical school. Residencies can also be much longer than 3 years, so medical students would not be returning to the state until 2020 (at the earliest), and possibly not until 2022.