

**WESTERN INTERSTATE COMMISSION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION (WICHE)**  
**From the College of Health Sciences, University of Wyoming**  
**OCTOBER 2019 (FY 2019 ANNUAL REPORT)**

[Pursuant to W.S. 21-16-201]

To the Joint Labor, Health and Social Services Interim Committee

**General Information**

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

**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 2019, Wyoming's representatives were UW President Laurie Nichols, Laramie; Senator 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. Additionally WICHE provides a recruiting tool for the University and community colleges, as well as research and information concerning trends and issues in higher education.

**Budget Information**

FY 2019 General Fund Expenditures \$2.3 million.

**Meeting frequency**

The WICHE Commission meets twice per year. WICHE Certifying Officers meet once a 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 101 students to out-of-state programs in 2018-19 in 8 different fields (medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, physical therapy, occupational therapy, optometry, osteopathic medicine, and physicians' assistant study; podiatry is also available but not currently being utilized by students). Wyoming sent 56 students to out-of-state institutions via the Western Regional Graduate Program, while receiving 5. 1,024 Wyoming students participated in Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE), attending schools in other WICHE states while 1,754 WUE students attended Wyoming institutions from other WICHE states.

The University of Wyoming is a member of WICHE's 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/commonwealth 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 program instituted a contract and payback program for all students entering in 2013 except for those in veterinary medicine. Significant numbers of students are beginning to return to the state to practice.

**Current statistics:**

- 126 Signed WICHE PSEP Contracts (through 2019) less 2 withdraws
- 65 graduates (through 2019)
  - 41 Practicing in Wyoming
  - 26 Practicing outside Wyoming
  - 5 Enrolled in specialty residencies
  - 3 Grace period
- 59 currently enrolled in Western professional programs

Wyoming WICHE PSEP contract graduates fields are:

- 4 Dentistry
- 14 Medicine (MD)
- 10 Medicine (DO)
- 13 Optometry
- 14 Occupational Therapy
- 14 Physician's Assistant
- 57 Physical Therapy

Wyoming WICHE PSEP contract graduates and practice sites:

- 1 Big Piney
- 2 Buffalo
- 1 Burlington
- 3 Casper
- 6 Cheyenne
- 2 Cody
- 4 Gillette
- 1 Green River
- 1 Grover
- 3 Jackson

6	Laramie
1	Mills
2	Powell
1	Rock Springs
4	Sheridan
1	Sundance
1	Wheatland
1	Worland

This program appears to be filling its intended purpose with 41 health care providers returning to Wyoming practice, 5 in residencies, and 3 in the grace period. It is expected that physicians, dentists, and optometrists will return 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, so 2018 is the earliest graduates were required to be back in 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.

**Agency Contact**

David Jones, Dean, College of Health Sciences  
University of Wyoming  
1000 East University Avenue, Dept. 3432  
Laramie, WY 82071  
(307) 766-5712  
[dljones@uwyo.edu](mailto:dljones@uwyo.edu)