



WICHE NewsCap

WICHE
Western Interstate Commission
for Higher Education



WICHE Headquarters in the State Higher Education Policy Center, Boulder, CO © wiche/allen

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WICHE Commission selects Lt. Gov. Garcia as the organization's new president.

WICHE Chair Michael G. Rush announced Nov. 10 that Colorado Lt. Gov. Joseph A. Garcia will succeed WICHE President David A. Longanecker who plans to retire. Garcia will leave his dual role, which includes serving as executive director of the Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE) before July 2016 to become the seventh executive to lead WICHE in its 62 years.

Rush said Garcia is ideally suited to advance WICHE's mission of ensuring access to education and student success. "Joe is an engaging, thoughtful, and visionary leader who will build on David Longanecker's success in helping Western states tackle some of higher education's most pressing problems. Throughout his career he has worked to improve remedial education, enhance the transfer process between two- and four-year campuses, increase underrepresented ethnic minority students' educational success, and create a seamless public education system for Colorado children of all ages."

Before he was inaugurated as lieutenant governor in 2011, Garcia was president of Colorado State University – Pueblo. During his four-year tenure there he helped overcome financial difficulties and stagnant enrollment and he enhanced the institution's reputation through aggressive marketing and non-traditional solutions. Lt. Gov. Garcia earlier served as president of the second-largest community college in Colorado, Pikes Peak Community College. He also has served as the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Secretary's Representative for the Rocky Mountain States; Executive Director of the Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies; and was named the first Hispanic partner in the 100-year history of the law firm, Holme Roberts & Owen.



▶ Sen. Kohl-Welles, Sullivan, and Rush elected as 2016 WICHE officers.

At its Nov. 2-3 semi-annual meeting in Boulder, the WICHE Commission elected three veteran members as officers for 2016. The new chair is [Sen. Jeanne Kohl-Welles](#), who has served 23 years in the Washington State Legislature and in January will be sworn in as a member of the King County Council. The new vice chair is [Patricia Sullivan](#), associate dean for outreach and public service in the College of Engineering at New Mexico State University. [Michael G. Rush](#), executive director and CEO of the South Dakota Board of Regents, transitioned from his role as 2015 WICHE Commission chair to immediate past chair. Sen. Kohl-Welles has served on the WICHE Commission since 2006, Sullivan since 2003, and Rush since 2008.



Sen. Kohl-Welles



Sullivan



Rush

▶ WICHE awarded \$2.99 million federal grant to scale up and enhance Interstate Passport.

A major expansion of WICHE's groundbreaking Interstate Passport initiative will be supported over the next four years by a \$2.99 million First in the



World grant, awarded by the U.S. Department of Education in September. The Passport – a newly designed framework of learning outcomes and proficiency criteria – represents a significant reform of policies and procedures affecting postsecondary students who transfer from one institution to another across state lines. It is aimed at improving graduation rates, shortening time to degree, and saving students money.

“Many states have improved transfer pathways for students within their states, but this is not enough for today’s increasingly mobile student population,” said Pat Shea, the Passport’s project director. “Students who earn a Passport at a participating institution in one state and transfer to one in another state will have their learning achievement recognized. They will not be required to repeat courses at the receiving institution to meet lower-division general education requirements.”

Development of the Passport, which began in October 2011, has been supported by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, Lumina Foundation, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Currently, 22 two- and four-year institutions and organizations in seven Western states (CA, HI, ND, OR, SD, UT, WY) are participating in Phase II of the project, focused on development of a final set of learning outcomes and proficiency criteria in nine lower-division content areas.

The scope of the project will widen in the next few months with the selection of six states – with some outside the WICHE region – to serve as testing grounds for various elements of the Passport that have been designed over the past two years. In the six new states, teams of faculty, registrars, institutional researchers, and academic advisors at 12 two- and four-year institutions will focus on nuts-and-bolts implementation issues, such as the process for identifying their institution’s Passport Block; notating the Passport on student records; tracking Passport students’ academic progress; and building awareness of the Passport among students, parents, and staff. Case Studies chronicling their efforts will be used to help inform the mapping work described below

The newly awarded First in the World grant funds will support four major components of the Passport initiative:

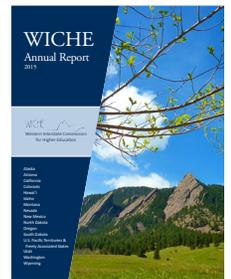
- Building a more robust and automated national data collection and student tracking infrastructure for the Passport, in partnership with the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC). The expanded Passport-Verify infrastructure will allow institutions to find out if, where, and when incoming transfer students have earned a Passport so that their learning is recognized. The tracking system will follow students for two terms after they transfer to capture information about their academic progress for use by sending institutions in their continuous improvement efforts.
- Engaging lower-division general education faculty at partner institutions in mapping critical assignments in designated courses to Passport Learning Outcomes, and in sharing ideas in competency assessment among institutions. Six institutions in Colorado, Montana, and New Mexico will participate in this work, to be carried out in partnership with the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS).

- Launching a marketing campaign that builds awareness of the benefits of participating in the Passport program, including webinars for faculty, registrars, institutional researchers, advisors, and other key stakeholders in the higher education community.
- Researching the impact of the Passport on transfer students. The School of Management and Labor Relations’ Education and Employment Research Center at Rutgers University will identify the commonalities and unique challenges of integrating the Passport into institutions’ transfer policies and procedures; examine the processes of ensuring quality and external validity for the new learning outcomes; and assess the impact of the Passport on transfer student retention and completion, especially for low-income students.

For more information about the Passport, [click here](#).

► WICHE’s annual report for FY 2015

now available. WICHE’s [2015 Annual Report](#) recaps the organization’s work during fiscal year 2015 to expand access to higher education, foster student success, create and sustain institutional and state collaborations and innovations, and promote sound public policy. It includes a message from President David Longanecker reflecting on his 16 years at the helm of WICHE, how the organization has grown and adapted to change, and its readiness to address new challenges and opportunities.



► New WICHE publications focus on higher-education affordability, access, and financing in the Western states.

Two new publications provide a variety of useful, up-to-date information for education and policy leaders in the WICHE region. The first, [Tuition and Fees in Public Higher Education in the West, 2015-16](#), provides a state-by-state and institution-by-institution review of tuition changes from year to year, going back to 2005-06, and presents published tuition and fee amounts as averages both unweighted and weighted by FTE enrollments. The report shows modest increases in published tuition and mandatory fees for in-state/in-district undergraduates in the West between 2014-15 and 2015-16 — 2.7 percent at public four-year institutions and 1.8 percent at public two-year institutions. A companion publication, [Benchmarks: WICHE Region 2015](#), offers a set of slides and data tables showing Western states’ progress over time in improving access to, success in, and financing of higher education.

► WICHE president lauds Brian Prescott’s achievements as director of policy research.

Over the past 11 years, Brian Prescott has led a number of key WICHE initiatives focused on issues ranging from student financial aid to the completion agenda to data systems development. His many accomplishments were cited at the WICHE Commission’s semi-annual meeting, where President David Longanecker announced that Prescott



will be leaving WICHE later this month for a position with the Association for Institutional Research (AIR).

As co-director of WICHE's Policy Analysis and Research unit, Prescott has had primary responsibility for obtaining and analyzing education and workforce data with public policy relevance. He has managed a variety of grant- and contract-funded projects; written policy briefs, chapters, and research reports; and is author of the two most recent editions of *Knocking at the College Door*, WICHE's widely used projections of high school graduates by state and race/ethnicity. Most recently, he has managed WICHE's Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation-funded project to develop a multistate longitudinal data exchange. The goal is to provide a more comprehensive and regional view of the development and mobility of human capital than has heretofore been possible by exchanging data that spans the K-12, postsecondary, and workforce systems. Prescott, who earned a Ph.D. in higher education at the University of Virginia, served on the board of directors of the National Association for College Admission Counseling from 2012 to 2014.

► **New policy brief focuses on forging stronger links between the public workforce and postsecondary education systems.** Among the most notable features of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA) is that it paves the way for states to make greater use of cross-system partnerships, career pathway models, performance measurement and data-driven improvement, and other mechanisms for bringing their workforce training and higher education agendas into better alignment. A [WICHE policy brief](#) published in November provides a useful overview of the key components of WIOA, and looks at how state higher education leaders can be instrumental in facilitating the engagement of their institutions with such partnerships at both the state and local levels. It presents specific opportunities for forging stronger links between the public workforce and postsecondary education systems and provides examples of states that are making progress on that front.

► **New competitively priced purchasing contracts available from MHECtech.** The Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC) recently announced that it has again selected Dell to provide hardware products and services to educational and governmental entities through its MHECtech initiative. Colleges, universities, K-12 districts and schools, cities, states, and local governments throughout the WICHE region can make purchases from Dell using the MHECtech contracts, under an agreement between MHEC and WICHE. MHEC staff and members of its technology committee completed a competitively sourced request for proposal (RFP) process and awarded Dell a contract to provide hardware and software and services, including network, server, and storage products as well as printing and personal computing devices. Also via an MHECtech RFP, Lenovo was recently selected to provide hardware products and services. The competitively bid agreement simplifies procurement and enables WICHE-region higher education institutions, K-12 districts and schools, and governmental entities to receive tiered discount guarantees

off Lenovo's commercial pricing for desktops, laptops, tableted devices, and services.

MHECtech RFPs and contracts are initiated and guided by Midwestern chief information officers, technical experts, and IT procurement professionals. In addition to being available to WICHE-region entities, the contracts' benefits extend within the Southern Regional Education Board's member states. Learn more at www.mhectech.org.

► **NANSLO co-sponsors students' high-altitude balloon launch in Montana.** A group of students from Great Falls College Montana State University and a nearby high school recently had the opportunity to launch and track a helium-filled latex balloon that reached 101,000 feet before bursting and parachuting its 10-pound payload back to Earth. The balloon, equipped with a GPS device and a GoPro camera, carried instruments capable of measuring atmospheric variables such as ozone, methane, temperature, and smoke levels. Also on board were yeast cells, plant seeds, and brine shrimp eggs, which will be used by the students to assess the effects of high-altitude radiation on survivability and mutation rates.



The balloon launch was co-sponsored by Great Falls College MSU, Simms High School, the Montana Space Grant Consortium, and the North American Network of Science Labs Online (NANSLO), which provides remote access to sophisticated scientific equipment for a growing number of students at 18 colleges in five states. Additional launches will take place over the next several months.

A [2.43-minute video](#) recently posted on YouTube offers a useful overview of NANSLO, based at WICHE, and a look at its host labs in Colorado, Montana, and British Columbia. To date, NANSLO has designed and delivered 27 openly licensed lab activities for introductory biology, chemistry, physics, and allied health courses with more to come. Faculty can use these activities, as developed, or can customize them for their curriculum. Over the Internet, students participate in conversations with their lab partners in other locations as they conduct activities in real time and collect real data for their lab reports. For additional information, contact Sue Schmidt at sschmidt@wiche.edu.

Garcia (continued from first page)

Lt. Gov. Garcia has been actively involved throughout his career as a board member for many non-profit agencies such as the YMCAs of Pueblo, Colorado Springs, and Denver; Pikes Peak Legal Aid; the Colorado Springs and Pueblo Economic Development Agencies; The Colorado Housing and Finance Authority (where he served as board president); the Pikes Peak Child Nursery Centers Inc.; the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities; and numerous other civil rights, educational, and cultural organizations. He earned a business degree from the University of Colorado and a juris doctorate from Harvard Law School.