



UNIVERSITY  
of HAWAII®

David Lassner  
President

**DEPT. COMM. NO. 67**

November 10, 2021

The Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi,  
President and Members of the Senate  
Thirty-First State Legislature  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

The Honorable Scott Saiki, Speaker  
and Members of the House of Representatives  
Thirty-First State Legislature  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear President Kouchi, Speaker Saiki, and Members of the Legislature:

For your information and consideration, the University of Hawai'i is transmitting one copy of the Annual Report on the University of Hawai'i's Continued Participation in the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (Section 304A-3205, Hawai'i Revised Statutes) as requested by the Legislature.

In accordance with Section 93-16, Hawai'i Revised Statutes, this report may be viewed electronically at: <https://www.hawaii.edu/offices/government-relations/2022-legislative-reports/>.

Should you have any questions about this report, please do not hesitate to contact Stephanie Kim at 956-4250, or via e-mail at [scskim@hawaii.edu](mailto:scskim@hawaii.edu).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Lassner'.

David Lassner  
President

Enclosure

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# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI‘I SYSTEM ANNUAL REPORT



REPORT TO THE 2022 LEGISLATURE

Annual Report on  
the University of Hawai'i's Continued Participation in the  
Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education

HRS 304A-3205

November 2021

**Annual Report to the 2022 Hawai'i Legislature on  
the University of Hawai'i's Continued Participation in the  
Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education  
HRS 304A-3205**

**History and Membership**

The Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) was created in the 1950s by the Western Regional Education Compact to facilitate resource sharing among the higher education systems of the West. The WICHE Commission's 17 members include representatives from 15 Western states—Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawai'i, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming—and the U.S. Pacific territories and freely associated states (Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands).

Members work collaboratively to provide educational access and excellence for all citizens. WICHE and its staff are headquartered in Boulder, CO, and operate out of the State Higher Education Policy Center, which WICHE owns with the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association and the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems.

Since 1959, Hawai'i has benefitted from the partnership with WICHE through regional collaboration, resource-sharing, sound public policy and innovation.

**Governance**

The WICHE Commission, with three commissioners from each state, molds the organization's mission and sets its priorities. Each Commissioner is appointed by the Governor and serves a four-year term. Hawai'i's commissioners are David Lassner, President, University of Hawai'i; John Morton, Vice President Emeritus, Community Colleges of the University of Hawai'i; and Colleen Sathre, Vice President Emeritus, University of Hawai'i. WICHE also seeks assistance and advice from policymakers, educators, administrators and legislators. WICHE's Legislative Advisory Committee (LAC), composed of legislator-members from each state—including representatives from the state of Hawai'i, Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Representative Aaron Ling Johanson, and Representative Justin Woodson—have been crucial in helping to shape and strengthen state policymaking in higher education in the west by seeking strategies to further interstate collaboration. WICHE staff also serves the LAC by informing its members about emerging policy issues in the west. WICHE Hawai'i is assigned for administrative purposes to the University of Hawai'i.

**WICHE Workplan for 2022**

Each May, WICHE's 48-member Commission develops and approves the organization's annual Workplan. This Workplan outlines the diverse set of activities, projects, and initiatives that the WICHE Commission prioritized for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2019, all of which are intended to advance WICHE's mission.

WICHE's five key focus areas guide the work of the organization:

- Finance: Supporting aligned appropriations, tuition, and financial aid policy and practice at the institutional, state, and federal levels to promote affordability.
- Access and Success: Improving student access to, and success in, higher education, especially for those who are traditionally underserved.
- Workforce and Society: Ensuring the region's territories, states, and postsecondary institutions meet workforce and societal needs.
- Technology and Innovation: Developing and supporting innovations in technology and beyond that improve the quality of higher education and reduce costs.
- Accountability: Striving to ensure that students gain a valuable education and that government is receiving a strong return on its investment.

While the short- and long-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic continue to be uncertain, WICHE is committed to continue to work with us to provide the support and research/policy resources needed to help maintain efforts in student access and success, technology and innovation, and improving behavioral healthcare.

### **COVID-19 and Its Impacts**

In March, WICHE began sending out weekly emails that contained useful resources developed by WICHE and partner organizations to support higher education leaders, policymakers, and others navigating the pandemic. WICHE organized webinars to help states and institutions respond quickly and effectively to key issues, including supporting the mental health and wellness needs of students, faculty, and staff. The WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies posted on its website curated resources to assist faculty and staff in responding to the COVID-19 crisis and produced a collection of policy briefs to assist administrators in navigating the U.S. Department of Education's myriad regulatory relief actions.

In May of 2021, WICHE produced a report based upon their annual survey of tuition and fees at public postsecondary institutions in the West. While it was noted that there was minimal average increase in rates at both two- and four-year institutions between academic year (AY) 2019-2020 and AY 2020-2021, in most cases tuition rates were set before the onset of the pandemic.

However, while there wasn't much fluctuation in tuition nationally, where COVID has impacted states was in the significant budget implications that resulted in a strained and uncertain fiscal environment, which impacted how states would meet its goals and priorities in providing support for and to accessible postsecondary education opportunities.

Data from the report further notes that because of COVID-19, there was a departure from recent trends in state funding which found that overall student funding for higher education took a significant cut in fiscal year (FY) 2021.

Hawai'i was not immune to the affects of the COVID pandemic. While Hawai'i didn't see much fluctuation in the number of participants in student access programs for the Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) or Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP), where we actually saw an increase, there was fiscal impact to the Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP).

In the spring of 2020, during the height of the pandemic, with the final State appropriation for PSEP funding still uncertain, the number of new PSEP funding that would be awarded was scaled back to ensure that students previously awarded PSEP funding by the State of Hawai'i would continue to receive this benefit. More details will be presented later in this report.

## **WICHE's Added Value**

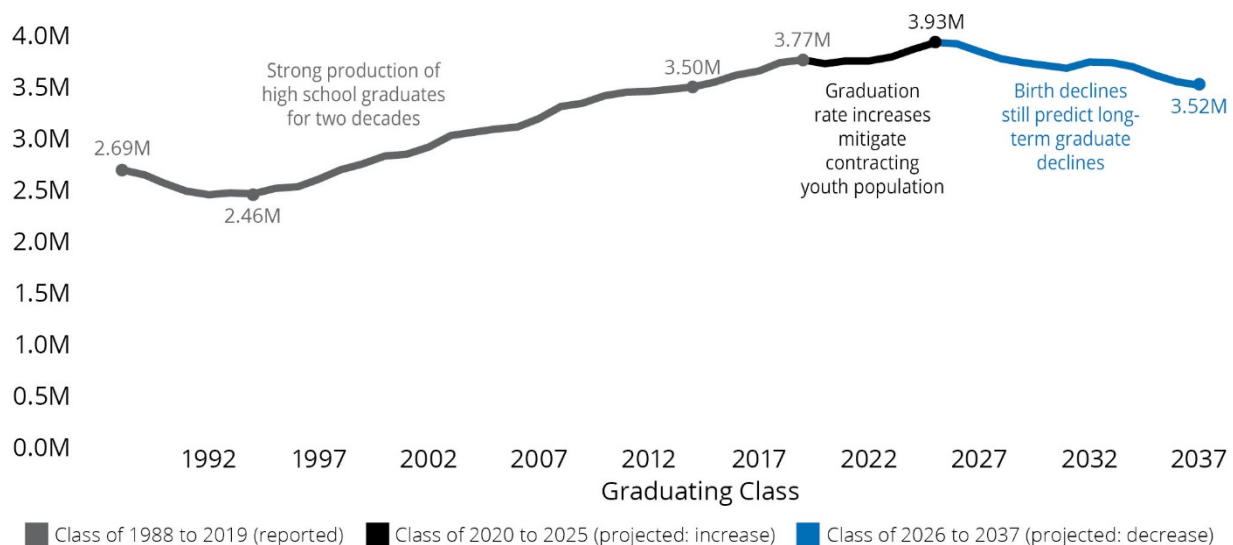
Hawai'i gains added value from WICHE's programs in policy, workforce development, technology, mental health, and other areas, which are discussed below.

## **Research and Policy**

WICHE is a valued research and policy resource that helps Hawai'i better allocate resources more efficiently with objective data and policy analysis, offering access to various data and policy resources to support better informed decision-making. WICHE's research projects and collaborations cover postsecondary completion, closing attainment gaps, adult learners, and multistate data-sharing to support educational planning and workforce development.

Hawai'i participates in projects, such as the Multistate Longitudinal Data Exchange program, and research projects, such as the *Knocking at the College Door* report. Access to these resources and a seat at the discussion table helps to support better informed decision-making at our state level.

WICHE's latest quadrennial [Knocking at the College Door](#) report, published in December of 2020, updated its previous projections of college-ready students noting that while there is going to be an expected peak in the number of high school graduates in the mid-2020s, we will see a modest decline through 2037.

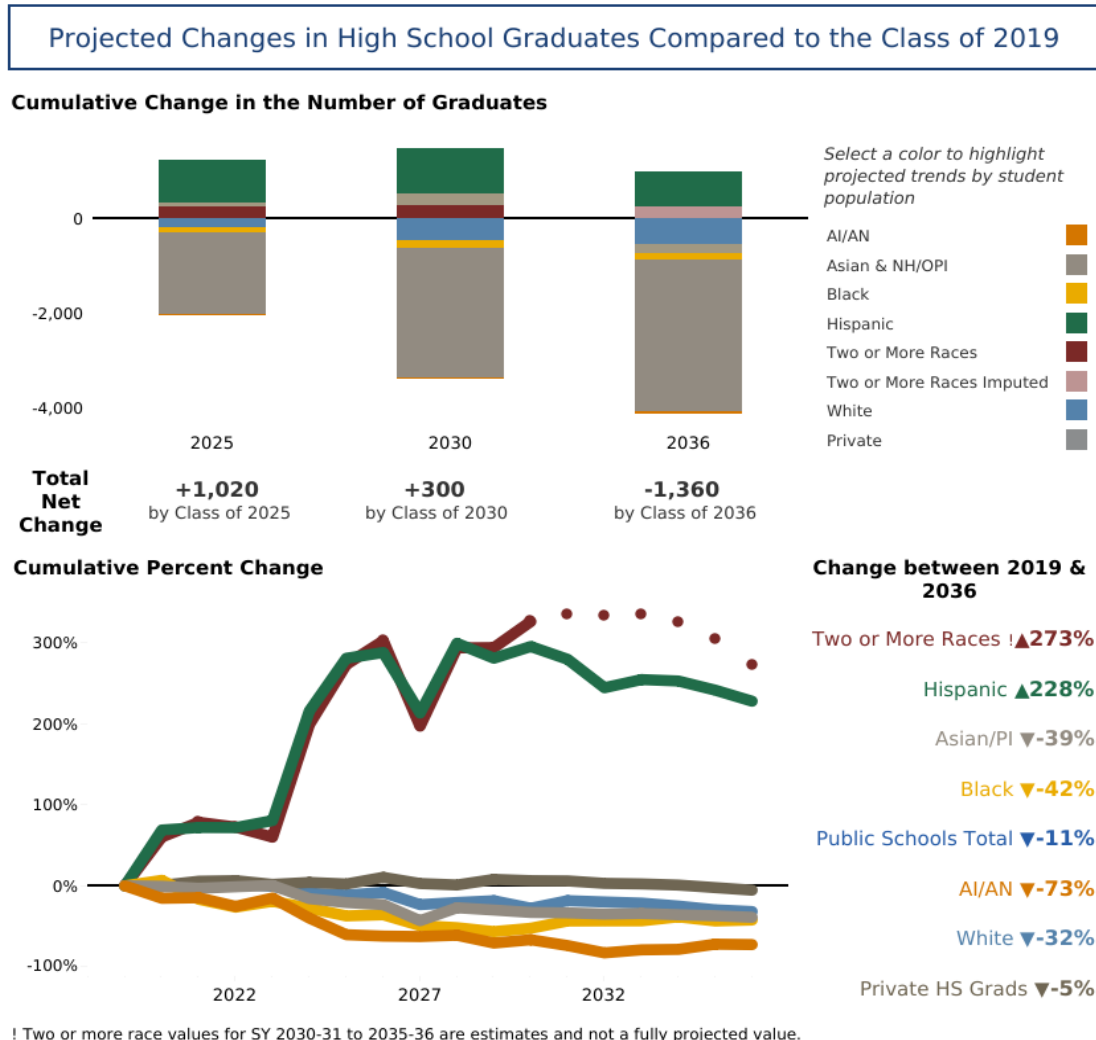


Source: Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, *Knocking at the College Door*, 10th edition, 2020. See [Technical Appendix](#) for detailed sources of data through the Class of 2019; WICHE projections, Class of 2020 through 2037. ([View states or regions](#))

*Knocking at the College Door* provides WICHE participating states with a plethora of information, including breaking down projections based upon race/ethnicity so states can pay close attention to the achievement gaps identified and take action to help close those gaps.

Through the data published in this report, Hawai'i is projected to have, at its peak in 2026, 15,800 graduates. Between the class of 2018 and the class of 2037, high school graduates are projected to average 14,530 per year. With this information on hand, our state can better prepare and lay the groundwork to help our students pursue higher educational opportunities.

Additionally, according to WICHE's latest *Knocking at the College Door Insight* report titled, "[COVID-19 and Public School Enrollments and Graduates](#)," as a result of the pandemic, Hawai'i did see lower than recent levels of public school 12<sup>th</sup> graders enrolled, which may be an indication of how these students may have been impacted in their progress from enrollment to graduation between October 2020 and May 2021. Yet, although Hawai'i saw a decline, last year's enrollment reductions do not necessarily mean there will be fewer high school graduates.



**FIGURE 1 PROJECTED CHANGES IN HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES**

The projections from WICHE only provide a glimpse of the possible impacts on the number of high school graduates resulting from the public school grades 1 to 12 enrollment declines as a result of this past year. However, these students could have shifted to homeschooling or private schools. It is also noted that the predicted trend line of total U.S. high school graduates might not be altered if the students who did not show up in public schools in the fall of 2020 become as likely or more likely to ultimately graduate in the other environments that their families opted for.

### **Providing Leadership in Digital Learning**

The University of Hawai'i is also active as a member of WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies (WCET), the leader in the practice, policy, and advocacy of technology-enhanced learning in higher education. WCET is widely recognized as an informative, reliable, and forward-thinking organization regarding the role of technology and innovation in higher education. WCET's growing membership includes almost 400 institutions, higher education agencies and systems, nonprofit organizations, government agencies, and corporations in all U.S. states and several Canadian provinces. WCET members have access to trusted information on emerging trends, policies, and exemplars of successful learning technology innovation in practice.

The State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) is a voluntary, state-led initiative designed to establish comparable standards for U.S. states and territories regulating postsecondary distance education. SARA expands access to postsecondary educational opportunities, while ensuring meaningful consumer protections for students and reducing regulatory red tape for institutions. WICHE is responsible for coordinating the membership of SARA states in the west through the WICHE State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (W-SARA). Currently, Hawai'i has ten institutions participating in this program, of which eight of our ten University of Hawai'i campuses are members. They include: Hawai'i Community College, Kapi'olani Community College, Kaua'i Community College, Leeward Community College, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, University of Hawai'i Maui College, University of Hawai'i West O'ahu, and Windward Community College. W-SARA is also advised by a Regional Steering Committee (RSC) that is responsible for evaluating and determining whether WICHE states and territories that participate in SARA demonstrate adequate capacity and sufficient standards for membership and provides oversight of institutions under SARA. Hawai'i is represented on this leadership board by Hae Okimoto, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs and Director of Academic Technologies.

At the outset of the COVID-19 outbreak, all of our institutions had to pivot to emergency remote learning which dramatically increased the exclusively distance education enrollment numbers. Overall, institutions participating in SARA reported 1,888,067 out-of-state exclusively distance education enrollments, 90.0% in SARA states and 10.0% in non-SARA states (California and the territories not participating in SARA). This compares to 90.7% in SARA states (1,265,470) and 9.3% in non-SARA states (130,286) in 2019. Of course, during the pandemic, Hawai'i saw a dramatic increase in the exclusively distance education enrollment. The charts below illustrate this.

Top 5 Institutions by Exclusively Distance Education Enrollment - Hawaii			
Institution	State SARA Group Instit..	In-State	Out-of-State
Leeward Community College	Hawaii	4,875	53
Kapiolani Community College	Hawaii	3,612	122
University of Hawaii - West Oahu	Hawaii	2,595	44
Touro University Worldwide	Hawaii	9	2,060
Hawaii Community College	Hawaii	1,563	22

FIGURE 2 TOP 5 HI INSTITUTIONS BY DE ENROLLMENT

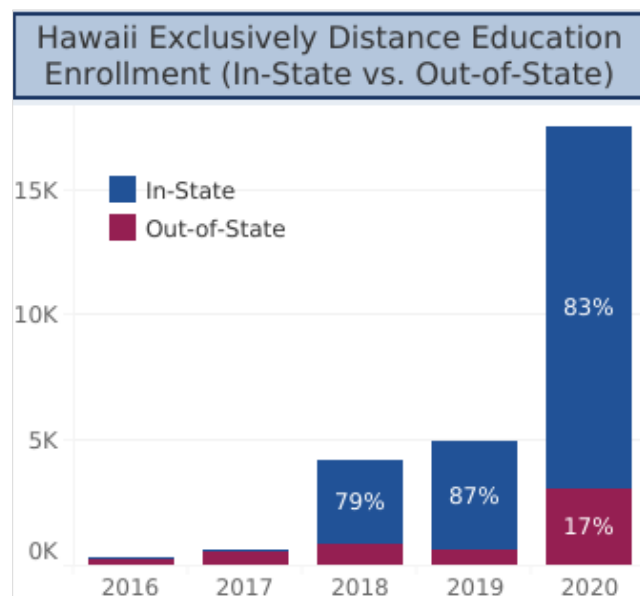


FIGURE 4 EXCLUSIVELY DE ENROLLMENT

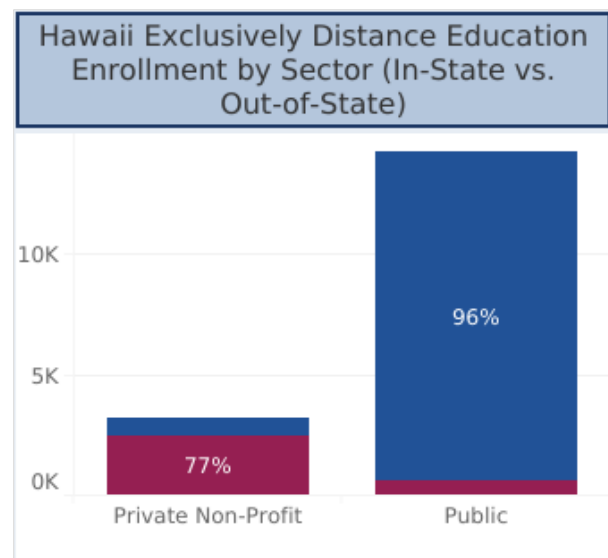


FIGURE 3 DE ENROLLMENT BY SECTOR

Additionally, as a part of being a WICHE member, Hawai'i also has access to resources such as [Every Learner Everywhere](#), which is a network of 12 organizations that are committed to help institutions use new technology to innovate teaching and learning, with the ultimate goal of improving student outcomes for Black, Latinx, and Indigenous students, poverty-affected students, and first-generation students. This network is funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and hosted within WCET.

The network provides two- and four-year institutions with consulting, training, and resources to support the adoption and implementation of adaptive courseware. Hawai'i schools have been an active part of this network, taking advantage of resources from such partners as Achieving the Dream and WCET, as noted above, just to name a few.



### **Focus on Behavioral Health Workforce Development**

WICHE has been very active in Hawai'i, focusing on issues of behavioral health workforce development and providing technical assistance to state agencies involved in behavioral health services. WICHE helps to bolster Hawai'i's health workforce through the following programs and initiatives.

Through the Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP), students from Hawai'i can enroll in participating programs in another state while receiving substantial tuition support. Currently, Hawai'i supports students in dentistry, occupational therapy, optometry, physical therapy, and veterinary medicine.



**FIGURE 5: HAWAII CONSORTIA**

The WICHE Behavioral Health Program (BHP) helped to establish and continues to support rural psychology internship consortia in Alaska, Hawai'i, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, and Utah, with a new consortium in development in New Mexico. Currently, the consortia collectively produce an annual total of up to 29 interns, with on average 65 percent staying and working in the states where they completed their internships. The WICHE BHP continues to assist the

State of Hawai'i in the operation and continuous accreditation of its psychology internship consortium. A primary goal of the internship is to increase the number of psychologists in Hawai'i and build the state's behavioral health workforce. Three Hawai'i state agencies (Department of Education, Department of Health, and Department of Public Safety) provide funding to support the WICHE BHP's ongoing development and operations of the Hawai'i Internship Program (HI-PIC).

WICHE's Behavioral Health Program has a number of projects in Hawai'i that extend the state's ability to serve its residents. The Hawai'i Department of Education has contracted with the WICHE BHP to recruit and contract with clinical psychologists to ensure all program requirements for supervision and support of staff, students, and program fidelity are maintained for West Hawai'i's School-Based Behavioral Health (WH-SBBH) program. The WH-SBBH program has historically faced significant challenges recruiting and retaining professionals for service provision because of the rural and workforce challenges that leave WH-SBBH without the needed professional credentials to supervise and train new SBBH personnel.

## **Interstate Passport®**

Interstate Passport®, a nationwide program that facilitates block transfer of students' lower-division general education attainment based on learning outcomes, was collaboratively developed by WICHE-region faculty, registrars, institutional researchers, and advisors. Sixty-seven (67) regionally-accredited institutions in 21 states are currently members of the Interstate Passport® Network.

Students who earn a Passport and transfer to another Network-member institution need not repeat or take additional courses to meet that institution's lower-division general education requirements. Taking fewer unnecessary courses helps students complete degrees more quickly and at higher rates, with lower cost and debt—factors that also improve institutions' performance metrics. The Interstate Passport® program's focus on learning outcomes (instead of course-by-course articulation) increases curricular flexibility and reduces time spent negotiating equivalencies.

The academic progress of students who transfer with a Passport to other Network-member institutions is tracked through the National Student Clearinghouse and reported to students' sending institutions for use in continuous improvement and sustainability efforts. Additionally, the Student Transfer Destinations by State database, developed by the Interstate Passport® program, illustrates transfer patterns of students across the entire United States. Each cohort of students is made up of first-time students of any age who began their postsecondary studies in one of these years. Cohorts include both full-time and part-time students, and exclude students who received any degree or certificate from a two- or four-year institution prior to 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012 and 2014, respectively. This database serves as a dynamic tool to demonstrate, over time, the interstate and intrastate transfer trends among cohorts and provides a visual display of where students are transferring to and from across state lines (see [Interstate Passport](#)).

As of fall 2020, all ten of the University of Hawai'i campuses are now participating in the Interstate Passport® network. The University of Hawai'i West O'ahu and Leeward Community College have been members since 2016 and have been heavily involved in developing Interstate Passport policies and practices. In early 2020, the other eight institutions in the System joined—Hawai'i Community College, Honolulu Community College, Kapi'olani Community College, Kaua'i Community College, University of Hawai'i Maui College, University of Hawai'i Hilo, University of Hawai'i Mānoa, and Windward Community College. Overall



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*“After redesigning our block to align with our existing General Education Program, our campus was able to award more than 1,000 Passports in a single academic year. Of course, we hope our students will stay with us through graduation; however, it is comforting to know that those students who do leave, will now be better positioned to excel at their next institution.”*

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**Alan Rosenfeld,**  
**Associate Vice Chancellor of**  
**Academic Affairs**  
University of Hawai'i - West  
O'ahu

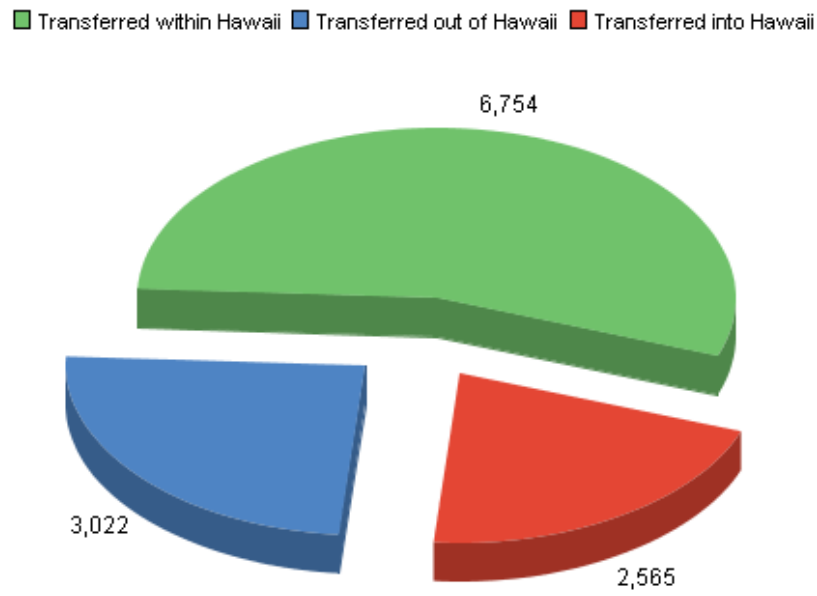
enrollment in the system is nearly 50,000 full- and part-time students across 700 undergraduate and graduate programs. With the participation of all University of Hawai'i campuses in this program, we look forward to next year's report on the number of Passports awarded.

The figures below show the overall student transfer data for fall cohorts of (2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014) for the state of Hawai'i.



FIGURE 6 TRANSFERS BY COHORT

FIGURE 7 OVERALL TRANSFERS





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*"These are not my students, nor your students, but our students. Together we can fix transfer."*

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**Peter Quigley,**  
**Professor of English**  
University of Hawai'i at  
Mānoa

For the 2020 reporting year, the number of institutions reporting Academic Progress Tracking data through the NSC for the 2019-2020 year was lower due to COVID. However, data is showing that students who transferred with a Passport to another Network-member institution and completed two terms by AY 2019-2020, the aggregated average weighted student credit hours (SCH) earned was 13.64, compared to 9.74 for students who transferred without a Passport; and the GPA of Passport earners were 3.54, which was statistically higher than the 2.92 aggregated GPA of students who transferred without a Passport in the same period.

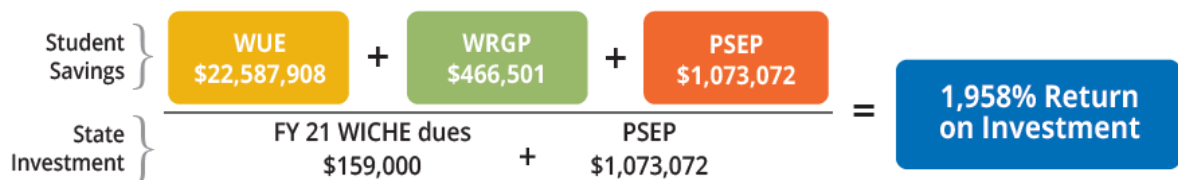
In looking ahead, as the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic on higher education will continue to be felt for some time, it has also highlighted the need to simplify student transfer within and among institutions. This has led to an increased focus among Network members to improve pathways in all transfer directions and make it a priority for institutions to review and revise its transfer policies, ensure acceptance of transfer credits, collaborate with other schools, and reach out to students who may have dropped out or stopped out. Through the Interstate Passport® initiative, Hawai'i is on the precipice of creating a significant shift in how transfer is done and improving equitable educational opportunity for students through transfer.

## Return on Investment

### Programs and Participation

Hawai'i is active in all three WICHE Student Access Programs: the Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE), the Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP), and the Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP). WICHE provides Hawai'i a strong return on investment.

Hawai'i has been a trusted partner in regional collaboration, resource sharing, sound public policy, and innovation since 1959, which has saved the state and our residents \$24.1 million through WICHE's Student Access Programs in AY 2020-2021.



### Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE)

The Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) is the nation's largest regional tuition-savings program, which allows students from a WICHE state or territory, to enroll in participating two- or four-year public colleges or universities located in another WICHE state or territory at a discounted tuition rate. Students can choose from over 160 participating WUE institutions that offer hundreds of majors and pay no more than 150 percent of that school's resident tuition.

In AY 2020-2021, over 42,000 WUE students and their families saved nearly \$412 million in tuition. Even in light of the unprecedented challenges higher education institutions faced because of the COVID-19 pandemic, WUE enrollment only dropped slightly in AY 2020-2021—just 0.1 percent. In the five years prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, WUE enrollments grew steadily at an average of 4.4 percent per year (from AY 2015-2019).

Through WUE, students have access to majors that may not be offered by our home state institutions. Students can choose from 164 WUE-eligible institutions and hundreds of majors.



*"WUE helped me to leave my home and comfort zone and be able to study alongside people with different beliefs, characteristic, and lifestyles than me."*

**Quentin - Hawai'i**  
Political Science major  
University of Northern Colorado



In the academic year 2020-2021:

- 2,163 Hawai'i undergraduates saved \$22.6 million paying up to 150% of resident tuition.
- Most popular schools: University of Nevada, Las Vegas (459 Hawai'i residents) and Northern Arizona University (243 Hawai'i residents).
- Hawai'i residents have saved \$318.3 million since 1988.

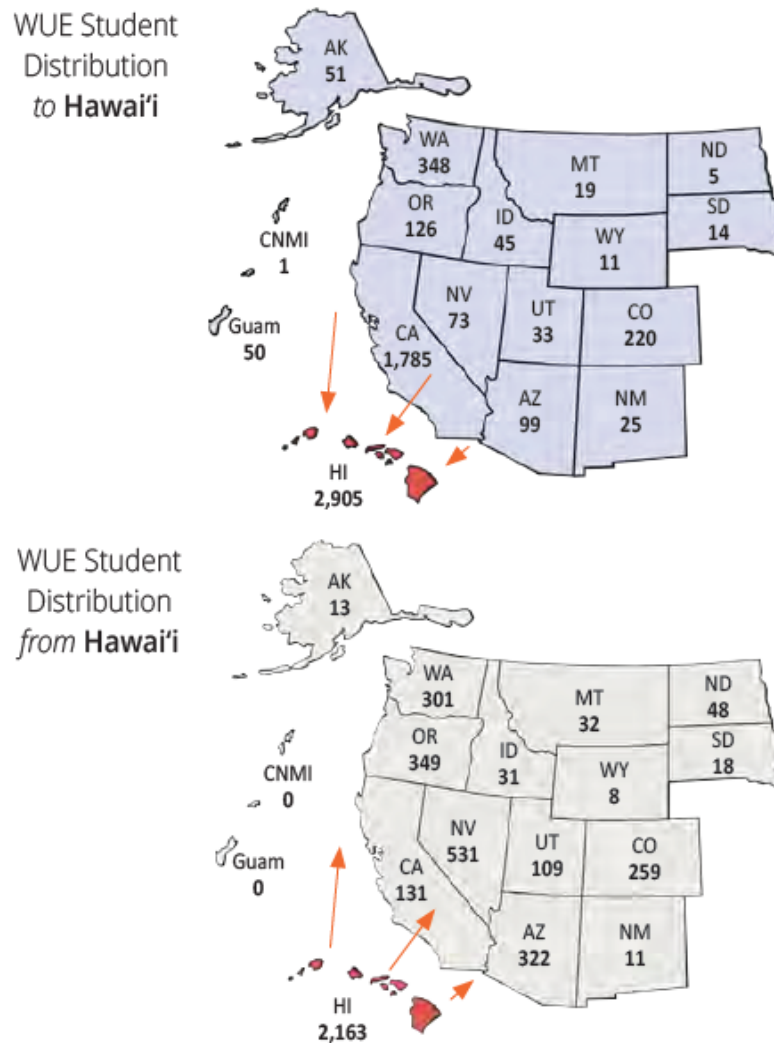


FIGURE 8 WUE DISTRIBUTION

Table 1. Western Undergraduate Exchange Program

Academic Year	Hawai'i Students Out-Bound to Continental US	Total Savings in Tuition and Fees	U.S. Continental Students In-Bound to Hawai'i
2020-2021	2,163 students	\$22.6 million	2,905 students
2019-2020	2,450 students	\$24.4 million	2,555 students
2018-2019	2,467 students	\$23.4 million	2,683 students

Hawai'i benefits from WUE in another way—by receiving students from out of state. Hawai'i's institutions can choose how many out-of-state slots to offer and in which areas, allowing them to make the best use of their resources by accepting students in under-enrolled programs. There's a workforce benefit for the state, too, as students often stay in Hawai'i after graduating.

**Table 2. Breakdown by University of Hawai'i Campuses**

Hawai'i institutions enrolled 2,905 WUE students from other WICHE states and Territories

4-Year	No. of Students	2-Year	No. of Students
U. of Hawai'i, Hilo	358	U. of Hawai'i, Maui College	11
U. of Hawai'i, Mānoa	2,516		
U. of Hawai'i, West O'ahu	20		

WICHE has now also made it easier for students to get information about institutions participating in two tuition-discount programs, the Western Undergraduate Exchange and the Western Regional Graduate Program, via two Savings Finder search portals. These new streamlined, database-driven interfaces allow students to refine their college searches by major, degree type, online course availability, eligibility requirements, and other filter criteria. This enhances the ability of admissions, recruitment, and enrollment managers at WICHE partner institutions to inform and connect with students about their institution.

### **Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP)**

WRGP allows WICHE-region students to enroll out of state and pay no more than 150 percent of resident tuition for more than 900 master's, graduate certificate, and doctoral programs at 60 participating public universities. In the 2019-2020 academic year, a record 1,907 students saved an estimated \$27.9 million in tuition through WRGP (an enrollment increase of 29 percent over the previous year). The number of graduate programs available through WRGP has dramatically expanded now that participating public universities may make any graduate program eligible at the WRGP tuition rate.

WICHE states and territories benefit from WRGP by attracting a broader and more diverse pool of students to pursue varied disciplines at their public institutions. WRGP remains an important alternative for students pursuing healthcare credentials (such as audiology, speech language pathology, graduate nursing, public health, and psychology) not offered through WICHE's Professional Student Exchange Program. Some WRGP programs are offered online, enabling place-bound and working students the opportunity to grow their educational credentials.



*“Utah didn’t offer the program I was interested in. As a first-generation college student with limited means, I thought my choices were limited and I never considered attending an out-of-state school. WRGP made it possible to pursue the degree I longed for in the setting that was right for me.”*

**Jacie, Utah**

Master of Public Health, Native and  
Indigenous Health  
University of Hawai'i

Hawai'i's postgraduates participated in graduate programs through the Western Regional Graduate Program, which offers access to high-quality, distinctive programs at some 60 institutions in all WICHE states. Additionally, Hawai'i graduate programs also received in 2020-2021:

- Hawai'i universities enrolled 190 WRGP students from other WICHE states.
- 38 Hawai'i graduate students saved \$466,501 paying reduced tuition in other Western states.

Table 3. Western Regional Graduate Program Use

Academic Year	Hawai'i Graduate Students Out-Bound to Continent	U.S. Continent Students In-Bound to Hawai'i
2020-2021	38	190
2019-2020	36	71
2018-2019	28	61

### **Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP)**

PSEP provides affordable access to 140 healthcare professional programs at some 60 institutions and in 10 healthcare fields—ranging from optometry to dentistry to veterinary medicine—for students in the Western region. In AY 2019-2020, 611 students received \$14.6 million (reflecting investment by their home legislatures) in tuition benefits through PSEP. Since its inception in 1953, PSEP has supported more than 15,000 students, many of whom return home to fill key healthcare positions.

Through PSEP, a student can save between \$32,600 and \$130,600 in tuition costs over the span of a professional health degree program depending on the field of study—reducing financial pressures and possibly enabling them to afford to work in rural areas that typically have lower salaries compared to urban areas or to pursue professional options that are less lucrative but sorely needed. Western states and territories benefit by inspiring and, in some participating states, requiring professionals to return home to practice and strengthen their communities' professional healthcare workforce.

By participating in PSEP, Hawai'i offers our local students the chance to realize their goal of pursuing a health profession. As a small state, with limited options in health profession educational programs, this partnership with WICHE PSEP provides that bridge and access for our students to pursue educational opportunities in the fields of veterinary medicine, dentistry, and physical therapy, one of our most popular programs, just to name a few. While applicants must meet Hawai'i's residency requirements and be "certified" for PSEP participation, we have seen interest in this program grow steadily over the years.

In the academic year 2020-2021:

- 46 students paid reduced tuition for healthcare studies not offered by public institutions in the home state and saved \$1,073,072.



- Hawai'i institutions and their local economies benefit, too. This year, four PSEP students enrolled in public programs located in Hawai'i. Institutions received \$106,280 in support fees to reduce the students' tuition costs.
- 65% of Hawai'i's PSEP graduates (from 2007 to 2016) returned home to practice; students are required to return home and serve.

With the launch of Hawai'i's [WICHE online application](#), we have seen an increase in applications, since now applying to PSEP is much more streamlined and easier for students. Below is an overview of the number of students the state of Hawai'i has supported over the last three academic years.

**Table 4. Professional Student Exchange Program Use**

Academic Year	2020-2021		2019-2020		2018-2019	
Professional Field	Total No. of Hawai'i Students Supported	Support Fees Paid	Total No. of Hawai'i Students Supported	Support Fees Paid	Total No. of Hawai'i Students Supported	Support Fees Paid
Dentistry	9	\$255,267	10	\$276,417	9	\$244,300
Occupational Therapy	3	\$38,135	3	\$37,333	2	\$36,534
Optometry	9	\$169,470	11	\$202,675	12	\$216,300
Physical Therapy	12	\$189,000	15	\$231,000	12	\$180,900
Veterinary Medicine	13	\$421,200	12	\$388,888	12	\$388,800
<b>TOTAL SUPPORT</b>	46	\$1,073,072	51	\$1,136,313	47	\$1,066,834

PSEP operates with the generous support of participating legislatures of WICHE member states and territories. The Hawai'i state legislature has consistently appropriated funds to buy down tuition costs for resident students to pursue professional degrees in selected healthcare fields. These funds are administered through WICHE and sent directly to enrolling university healthcare programs. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the uncertain fiscal outlook for Hawai'i, the number of awardees per category were scaled back this past academic year. While Hawai'i usually offers aid to at least two occupational therapy applicants, this year, we were only able to award one. Dentistry, optometry, and veterinary medicine were also categories that awarded one less spot than in recent years. We continue to see a high demand for physical therapy; however, we are only able to award five spots for this program in any given year.

The per-student award amounts for each eligible PSEP field are approved biennially by the WICHE Commission, most recently in June 2020 (download the June 2020 [WICHE Support Fees Memorandum for AY 2021-22 and AY2022-23](#)).

### **Future Considerations**

The University of Hawai'i's participation in WICHE, and especially in PSEP, is valuable to our state because it is our residents who are the real beneficiaries; our local students benefit from affordable access to higher education through WICHE's three Student Exchange Programs. Interest in participating in these programs continues to grow. Every year, we receive more applicants who are interested in participating in PSEP; however, across the five PSEP programs we currently support, we only average awarding about 15 new students annually while we receive between 80 to 120 applications a year.

These support fee costs for the PSEP programs are not fixed. It is projected that support fees per program will increase by almost three percent annually, and state dues are also projected to increase about three percent annually as well. Therefore, with this projected trajectory and the allocated funds we receive, we hope that, in light of the current budget crisis that Hawai'i finds itself in that we can keep the current PSEP funding levels so that we can continue to support the tuition of those students who are still mid-way through their programs, while also awarding a few new students for the next academic cycle.

**Table 5. Tuition Costs Academic Years (AY) 2020-2023**

Professional Field	Max. No. of PSEP Funding Years Per Student	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Dentistry	4 years	\$27,350	\$28,000	\$28,625
Occupational Therapy	2 2/3 years	\$14,300	\$14,650	\$14,975
Optometry	4 years	\$18,830	\$19,275	\$19,700
Physical Therapy	3 years	\$15,750	\$16,125	\$16,500
Veterinary Medicine	4 years	\$32,400	\$33,150	\$33,900