



# UNIVERSITY of HAWAII<sup>®</sup>

Ke Kulanui o Hawai'i

Wendy F. Hensel  
President

**DEPT. COMM. NO. 82**

December 9, 2025

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

The Honorable Nadine K. Nakamura, Speaker  
and Members of the House of Representatives  
Thirty-Third State Legislature  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear President Kouchi, Speaker Nakamura, 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/govrel/docs/reports/2026/hrs304a-3205\\_2026\\_wiche\\_annual-report\\_508.pdf](https://www.hawaii.edu/govrel/docs/reports/2026/hrs304a-3205_2026_wiche_annual-report_508.pdf).

Should you have any questions about this report, please do not hesitate to contact Stephanie Kim at (808) 956-4250, or via e-mail at [scskim@hawaii.edu](mailto:scskim@hawaii.edu).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Wendy Hensel".

Wendy F. Hensel  
President

Enclosure

# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## ANNUAL REPORT



### REPORT TO THE 2026 LEGISLATURE

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

HRS 304A-3205

November 2025

**Annual Report to the 2026 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.

Members work collaboratively to provide educational access and excellence for all citizens. WICHE and its staff are headquartered in Boulder, Colorado, 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. The Governor appoints each Commissioner who serves a four-year term. Hawai‘i’s commissioners are Wendy Hensel, President, University of Hawai‘i (UH) System; Terrence George, CEO and President, Hawai‘i Community Foundation; and David Lassner, President Emeritus of the 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 Andrew Garrett, and Representative Lisa Kitagawa – 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. The University of Hawai‘i System Office of the Vice President for Academic Strategy is also assigned to administratively manage WICHE-related programming for the Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP).

**WICHE Work Plan for 2026**

Each May, WICHE’s 48-member Commission updates and approves the organization’s annual work plan. WICHE’s Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Work Plan outlines new and continuing projects for the fiscal year beginning on July 1, 2025 that are designed to enhance postsecondary access, affordability, equity, and innovation across western states. Hawai‘i, as a WICHE member, plays an important role in several of these initiatives and stands to gain from shared research, data, and policy frameworks that support student success and workforce development. Information on WICHE’s work plan and their projects can be found at: <https://www.wiche.edu/resources/wiche-workplan-fy-2026/>.

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

- **Affordability & Finance:** Supporting the alignment of appropriations, tuition, and financial aid policy and practice at the institutional, state, and federal levels to make postsecondary education more accessible to those who seek it.
- **Access & Success:** Improving access to and success in postsecondary education for all students, especially those who have been historically underserved, by developing and sharing evidence-based strategies.
- **Workforce & Society:** Collaborating across all sectors, including but not limited to behavioral health, business, and industry, to meet the region's workforce needs so that our communities can thrive.
- **Innovation:** Developing and supporting advancements in teaching and learning, student services, and technology to help students access and succeed in postsecondary education and increase the value of their investment after completion.
- **Value & Accountability:** Collecting and measuring sound data about postgraduate outcomes to determine the true value of WICHE's partnerships for students and society at large so that we can continually improve how students, institutions, and WICHE members spend their time, effort, and money on postsecondary education and workforce training.

The strategic priorities are interwoven throughout the various programs, projects, and initiatives of the work plan and are executed by members of four operational units:

The four units responsible for implementing the work plan are:

- **Programs and Services:** This unit focuses on broadening student access and success and manages programs like the Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE), the Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP), and the Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP), fostering higher education collaborations that address institutional strategic goals. Through the work of this unit, WICHE helps institutions and undergraduate, graduate, and health professional students save money and efficiently use available resources. The unit also oversees initiatives that bring together the west's higher education leaders to address common goals and concerns and develop a new cadre of academic administrative leaders. More information on how these programs and services provide added value for Hawai'i will be provided later in this document.
- **Policy Analysis and Research:** This unit provides policy analysis and data resources. It is responsible for initiatives like the *Regional Fact Book for Higher Education in the West* and *Tuition and Fees in Public Higher Education in the West*. Access to this information and collaboration with other institutions in the region helps Hawai'i to make better-informed policy decisions, be exposed to other models of best practices in the region, and participate in valuable studies that provide a deeper understanding for how our state can better prepare and lay the groundwork to help our students pursue higher educational opportunities.

- **Behavioral Health Program:** This unit aims to support the workforce and public systems that serve individuals with behavioral health issues. It manages various projects, including the psychology internship consortia in multiple states, including Hawai‘i. More information on Hawai‘i’s involvement is discussed below.
- **WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies (WCET):** This unit promotes collaboration and information-sharing related to educational technologies in higher education. More information on Hawai‘i’s participation will be provided later in this document.

### **Overview of new and notable initiatives slated for FY26**

#### **1. Artificial Intelligence: Policy and Practice in Higher Education**

WICHE’s WCET division will continue exploring the implications of AI in education through research, webinars, and institutional resources. Efforts include helping institutions establish ethical and responsible use policies and implementing WCET’s *AI Policy and Practice Framework*.

**Benefit to Hawai‘i:** Supports UH System efforts to integrate responsible AI use, streamline operations, and prepare students for AI-driven workforce demands.

#### **2. Emerging Federal Policies in Digital Learning**

This initiative monitors and interprets evolving federal regulations around distance education, accreditation, and online program management [including the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA)].

**Benefit to Hawai‘i:** Ensures UH campuses remain compliant with national standards while expanding online learning and maintaining student protections.

#### **3. Reducing Postsecondary Attainment Gaps for American Indians and Alaska Natives**

Continues efforts to improve student outcomes at Native American-Serving Non-Tribal Institutions through culturally responsive practices and partnerships.

**Benefit to Hawai‘i:** Frameworks and equity strategies can be adapted to strengthen Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander student success initiatives.

#### **4. No Holding Back: Assessing Administrative Holds**

A new study examining how administrative holds affect student persistence, developed in partnership with the National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO).

**Benefit to Hawai‘i:** Insights will help UH review and revise institutional policies that may unintentionally hinder student progress and retention.

#### **5. Completion Strategies in the West**

A regional analysis funded by the ECMC Foundation to identify effective degree completion strategies and address barriers for non-completers.

**Benefit to Hawai‘i:** Data-driven insights for UH initiatives to re-engage stopped-out students and improve degree attainment across islands.

#### **6. Rural Nursing Education Evaluation**

The Rural Higher Education Center will evaluate train-in-place nursing programs to address healthcare shortages in remote areas.

**Benefit to Hawai‘i:** Offers transferable models for UH community colleges and health programs to strengthen the rural healthcare workforce on neighbor islands.

## 7. Open Educational Resources (OER) Consortium

A multi-regional collaboration to expand adoption and sharing of open educational resources, reducing textbook and course material costs.

**Benefit to Hawai'i:** Enhances affordability and supports UH's commitment to access and equity through systemwide OER initiatives.

### *Hawai'i's Involvement in WICHE's Work Plan*

As a WICHE member state, Hawai'i participates in many of WICHE's programs and initiatives. Specifically, Hawai'i participates in the following programs:

- The Western Academic Leadership Forum: Hawai'i's four-year institutions, associated systems, and state coordinating and governing boards are part of the Western Academic Leadership Forum. All three of our four-year universities, plus the University of Hawai'i System office, participate in the Western Academic Leadership forum for four-year institutions with Debora Halbert, Vice President for Academic Strategy, representing Hawai'i as a member of the Alliance executive committee.
- The Western Alliance of Community College Academic Leaders: Hawai'i's community colleges and technical schools and related systems and state agencies are members of the Western Alliance of Community College Academic Leaders. Currently, all seven Hawai'i Community Colleges and the University of Hawai'i Community College (UHCC) system office participate in the Western Alliance of Community College Academic Leaders; and Kahele Dukelow, Interim Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs for the University of Hawai'i Community Colleges, serves as a member of the Alliance executive committee.
- Western Undergraduate Exchange: Hawai'i's public two- and four-year institutions participate in the WUE program, allowing students from other WICHE states to pay reduced tuition.
- Western Regional Graduate Program: Hawai'i residents benefit from reduced non-resident tuition rates for graduate programs at participating institutions through WRGP.
- Professional Student Exchange Program: Hawai'i funds and/or enrolls Hawai'i students pursuing healthcare professional programs not available in our state through PSEP.

### *Hawai'i's Prominent Role in the Behavioral Health Program*

Two Hawai'i State departments — the Department of Education and the Department of Health — provide funding to support the WICHE Behavioral Health Program's (BHP) ongoing development and operations of the Hawai'i Psychology Internship Program (HI-PIC) with numerous sites participating in the internship. A primary goal of the internship is to increase the number of psychologists in Hawai'i and build the state's behavioral health workforce. The Hawai'i Department of Education also contracts with the WICHE BHP to provide recruitment and contracting of clinical psychologists to ensure all program requirements for supervision and support of staff, students, and program fidelity are maintained for West Hawai'i 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. The Hawai'i Department of Education

has also contracted with the WICHE Behavioral Health Program to provide recruitment of School-Based Behavioral Health and School Social Worker professionals.

The Together with Veterans (TWV) – Rural Veteran Suicide Prevention Program enlists rural veterans and local partners to reduce veteran suicide in their own community. Funded by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and administered by the WICHE BHP, TWV provides individualized coaching, tools, training, technical assistance, and resources, supporting 16 total communities in the WICHE region, representing 11 western states. The TWV Program has one site in Hawai'i and has served over 7,270 rural veterans.

### **WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies (WCET)**

WCET is the leader in the practice, policy, and advocacy of technology-enhanced learning in higher education. Its growing membership includes institutions, higher education agencies and systems, nonprofit organizations, government agencies, and corporations in all U.S. states and several Canadian provinces. WCET members include Kapi'olani Community College, the University of Hawai'i System, and the University of Hawai'i - West O'ahu. Gloria Niles, UH System Director of Online Learning, serves on the WCET Steering Committee and as vice chair on the Executive Council.

WICHE has also convened the OERwest Network, which is part of a nationwide collaborative to scale the development and adoption of free course materials. Open educational resources (OER) have shown promise in improving student outcomes, particularly for poverty-affected students, for whom the high cost of textbooks can be a barrier to postsecondary success.

### **Participation in the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA)**

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.

- *As of 2025, Hawai'i, 48 other states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands are SARA members. California and some U.S. territories (American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands) are non-SARA members.*
- *2,404 institutions reported data for 2024, with public institutions making up 48.9%, private non-profits 43.2%, private for-profits 7.7%, and tribal institutions 0.3%.*

*Source: [NC-SARA Annual Data Technical Report](#)*

Hawai'i has 16 total participating institutions including 10 public, four private not-for-profit, and two for-profit, with three new institutions added since its last renewal. In 2024, Hawai'i reported 10,619 Hawai'i-based students studying in out-of-state Exclusively Distance Education Enrollment (EDEE) degrees/programs in other SARA states. A total of 3,311 EDEE students studied in Hawai'i with 2,023 of them reported from SARA states and 1,288 from non-SARA states. Hawai'i also reported 1,685 outgoing Out-of-State Learning Placements (OOSLP) and received 1,728 incoming OOSLP.

## 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.



**Figure 1 - HAWAII'S RETURN ON INVESTMENT**

Source: [Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, Hawai‘i Factsheet Academic Year 2025](#)

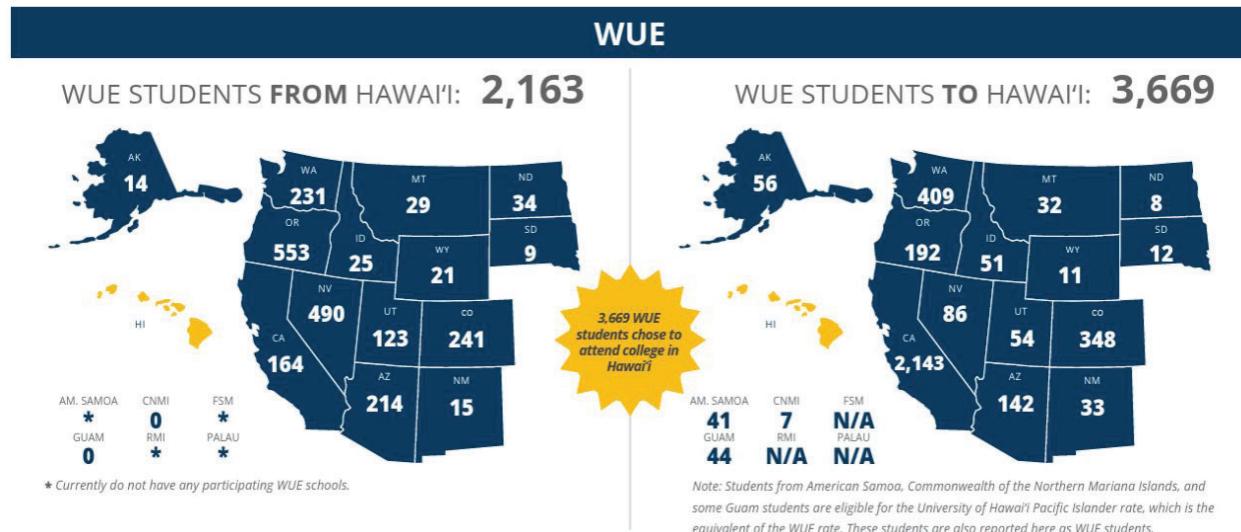
Hawai‘i has been a trusted partner in regional collaboration, resource sharing, sound public policy, and innovation since 1959. This partnership continues to save the state and our residents. Through WICHE’s Student Access Programs, students and families in the WICHE region have saved [\\$671 million in academic year \(AY\) 2024-2025](#) - Hawai‘i overall, saved our local students over \$30 million dollars, which is a 2,160% return on Hawai‘i’s investment through WICHE membership dues (\$169,000/FY 2025) and appropriations from the State legislature of \$1,447,465 to support PSEP.

### Western Undergraduate Exchange

WUE is the nation’s largest regional tuition-savings program, which allows students from WICHE state and Pacific Island members 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 170 participating WUE institutions that offer hundreds of majors and pay no more than 150% of that school’s resident tuition (often much less than the non-resident tuition rate they would normally pay). Through WUE, out-of-state study becomes more affordable for most families.

In the academic year 2024-2025:

- 2,163 Hawai‘i graduates saved over \$28.2 million by attending other WUE participating schools
- More WUE students came to Hawai‘i than left. In AY 2024-2025, 3,669 out-of-state students chose WUE schools in Hawai‘i compared to 2,163 Hawai‘i students who chose an out-of-state WUE school.
- The top three out-of-state WUE schools of choice for Hawai‘i graduates are: University of Nevada-Las Vegas (411), Oregon State University (347), and Washington State University (160).
- The top WUE feeder states sending students to Hawai‘i are California (2,143) and Washington (409).



**Figure 2 - WUE AY 2024-2025 STUDENT DISTRIBUTION**

Source: [Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, Hawai'i Factsheet Academic Year 2025](#)

**Table 1. Western Undergraduate Exchange Program by Year**

Academic Year	Hawai'i Students Out-Bound to Continental U.S.	Total Savings in Tuition and Fees	U.S. Continental Students In-Bound to Hawai'i
2024-2025	2,163 students	\$28.2 million	3,669 students
2023-2024	2,120 students	\$25.7 million	3,725 students
2022-2023	2,067 students	\$23.82 million	3,671 students

Hawai'i's institutions 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.

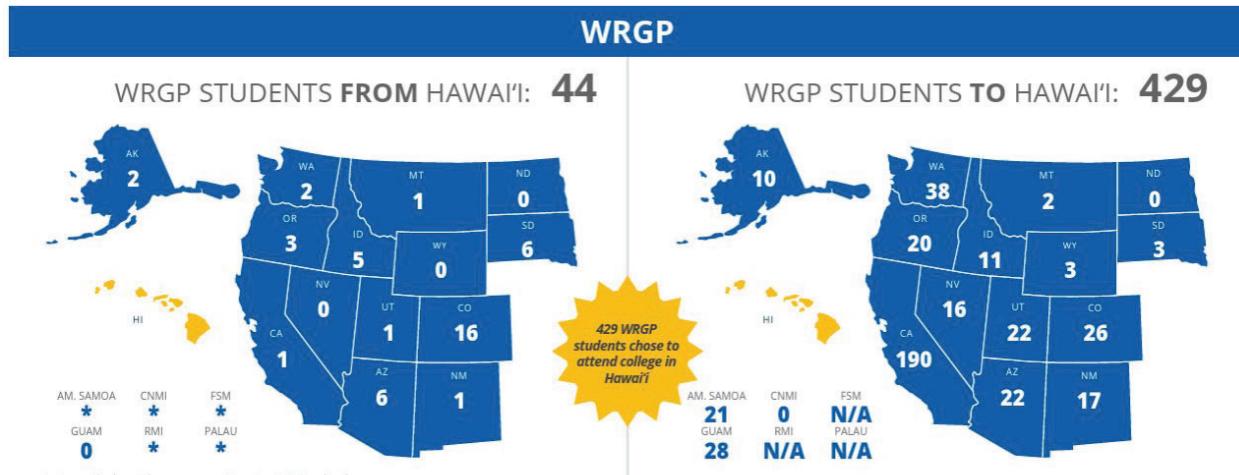
Hawai'i institutions enrolled 3,669 WUE students from other WICHE states and territories, with the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa enrolling the most.

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

4-Year	No. of Students
University of Hawai'i, Hilo	282
University of Hawai'i, Mānoa	3,379
University of Hawai'i, West O'ahu	6
University of Hawai'i, Maui College	2

## Western Regional Graduate Program

WRGP allows WICHE-region students to enroll out of state and pay no more than 150 % of resident tuition for more than 2,000 master's, graduate certificate, and doctoral programs at more than 60+ participating public universities. Since public-university non-resident tuition rates are typically much higher than resident rates—sometimes by 300% or more—WRGP increases affordable higher education options for students and minimizes student loan debt.



\* Currently do not have any participating WRGP schools.

**Figure 3 WRGP AY 2024-2025 STUDENT DISTRIBUTION**

Source: [Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, Hawaii Factsheet Academic Year 2025](#)

WRGP remains an important alternative for students pursuing healthcare credentials (in such programs as audiology, speech language pathology, graduate nursing, public health, and psychology) not offered through WICHE's Professional Student Exchange Program.



” With no architecture programs in my home state, seeking a degree out-of-state was inevitable. WRGP made my education more affordable and provided a dynamic and diverse learning environment that has enriched my educational experience. I recommend WICHE's Student Access Programs to anyone looking to reduce or avoid student loans.”

*Paul - Alaska  
Masters of Architecture  
University of Hawaii at Manoa*

Hawaii'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, our universities also benefit from WRGP, enrolling students in many of our graduate programs - with a significant increase in the number of students enrolling in the 2024-25 academic year.

- Hawai'i universities enrolled 429 WRGP students from other WICHE states.
- Top three out-of-state WRGP schools for Hawai'i students include the University of Arizona (5), University of Northern Colorado (5), and Dakota State University-SD (5).
- The top WRGP feeder states sending students to Hawai'i are California (190) and Washington (38).

**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
2024-2025	44	429
2023-2024	44	392
2022-2023	39	389

Source: [Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, Hawai'i Factsheet Academic Year 2025](#)

### **Professional Student Exchange Program**

The Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP) provides affordable access to over 130+ healthcare professional programs in 10 eligible PSEP healthcare fields at 60 institutions—ranging from optometry to dentistry to veterinary medicine—for students in the western region. With out-of-state tuition for some healthcare programs often exceeding resident tuition by over 300%, this can be daunting for tomorrow's health professionals. It may saddle them in debt, force them to leave their community for more lucrative opportunities, or discourage them from pursuing a passion to heal.

WICHE collaborates with 12 western states and Pacific Island jurisdictions to provide a solution. Through the PSEP, students pursuing careers in 10 health fields – ranging from optometry to dentistry to veterinary medicine – may enroll in participating programs across state lines and receive substantial tuition support from their home state or territory.

Through PSEP, a student can save between \$36,500 to \$142,800 on tuition over the duration of a health degree study. By participating in PSEP, western states and territories benefit by inspiring and compelling graduates to return home to practice and bolster the professional health care workforce of their communities.

Through PSEP, Hawai'i offers local students the chance to realize their goal of pursuing a professional degree in a health profession not offered in our state. 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, some 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 2024-2025:

- 51 students paid reduced tuition for healthcare studies not offered by public institutions in Hawai'i, saving \$1.2 million.
- 62% of Hawai'i's PSEP graduates (from 2012 to 2021) returned home to practice; students are contractually required to return home and serve.
- Hawai'i's institutions and their local economies benefit too. This year, one PSEP student enrolled in a program located in Hawai'i. The institution received \$35,700 in support fees to reduce the student's tuition costs

Below is an overview of the number of students Hawai'i has supported over the last three years.

**Table 4. Professional Student Exchange Program**

Academic Year	2024-2025		2023-2024		2022-2023	
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	8	\$269,101	8	\$253,500	9	\$267,167
Occupational Therapy	5	\$41,667	5	\$91,800	5	\$69,883
Optometry	12	\$246,900	12	\$241,500	12	\$236,400
Physical Therapy	12	\$206,700	15	\$252,750	13	\$214,500
Veterinary Medicine	14	\$460,200	15	\$485,100	14	\$440,700
<b>TOTAL SUPPORT</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>\$1,224,568</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>\$1,324,650</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>\$1,228,650</b>

Source: [Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, Hawai'i Factsheet Academic Year 2025](#)

PSEP operates with the support of participating legislatures of WICHE member states and territories. The Hawai'i State legislature has consistently appropriated funds to subsidize tuition 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.

The per-student award amounts for eligible PSEP fields are approved biennially by the WICHE Commission, which most recently approved program support fee increases for AY 2025-26 and AY 2026-27 at the May 2024 WICHE Commission meeting. Program support fee increases, as outlined below, will apply to all fields served by PSEP, five of which Hawai'i participates in.

There are more than 90 students who apply for Hawai'i PSEP funding annually. We continue to see interest and high demand in the areas of dentistry, physical therapy, and veterinary studies; however, due to our limited budget, we are only able to award minimal spots each year.

**Table 5. Program Fee Increase for AY 2025-26 and AY 2026-27 Biennium**

Professional Field	Max. No. of PSEP Funding Years Per Student	2025-26	2026-27
<b>Dentistry</b>	4 years	\$31,200	\$32,550
<b>Occupational Therapy</b>	2 2/3 years	\$16,300	\$17,025
<b>Optometry</b>	4 years	\$21,475	\$22,400
<b>Physical Therapy</b>	3 years	\$17,975	\$18,750
<b>Veterinary Medicine</b>	4 years	\$36,950	\$38,550

*Award amounts are for standard program lengths. Adjustments are made for accelerated programs; three-year programs in pharmacy and dentistry receive slightly more, annually, but for fewer years.*

*Source: [Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, What's a PSEP Award Worth](#)*

### **Future Considerations and Benefits of Hawai'i's Participation in WICHE**

The University of Hawai'i's participation in WICHE, and especially in PSEP, is valuable to our state because residents are the true beneficiaries. WICHE allows local students to benefit from affordable access to higher education through WICHE's three Student Exchange Programs. Interest in participating in these programs continues to grow. Through the PSEP program, Hawaii has seen approximately 62% of students return home to practice.

HAWAII*			
Field	Total number of graduates	Number returned to state	Percentage returned
Dentistry	20	12	60%
Occupational Therapy	17	10	59%
Optometry	25	18	72%
Pharmacy	11	7	64%
Physical Therapy	45	27	60%
Veterinary Medicine	26	15	58%
<b>HAWAII TOTAL</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>62%</b>

*Figure 4 - WICHE Student Access by the Numbers last reported in AY2022-23*

## Estimated Fiscal Impact of the Proposed PSEP Support Fees by State/Territory: AY 2025 and 2026 (continued)

Field	HAWAII					
	No. of Students AY 2023	Approved Fees AY 2024	Projected Fees AY 2025	Projected Increase from AY 2024 to 2025	Projected Fees AY 2026	Projected Increase from AY 2025 to 2026
Dentistry	8	\$239,200	\$249,600	\$10,400	\$260,400	\$10,800
Occupational Therapy	5	\$78,125	\$81,500	\$3,375	\$85,125	\$3,625
Optometry	12	\$246,900	\$257,700	\$10,800	\$268,800	\$11,100
Physical Therapy	15	\$258,375	\$269,625	\$11,250	\$281,250	\$11,625
Veterinary Medicine	15	\$531,000	\$554,250	\$23,250	\$578,250	\$24,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>\$1,353,600</b>	<b>\$1,412,675</b>	<b>\$59,075</b>	<b>\$1,473,825</b>	<b>\$61,150</b>
<b>Percent Change</b>				<b>4.36%</b>		<b>4.33%</b>

Figure 5 – Estimated Fiscal Impact of Fee Increase

**To continue supporting current students and expand scholarship opportunities for more Hawai'i residents, increased financial support from the legislature is essential.** While we aim to help more local students pursue their education and return to serve their communities, the costs associated with the Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP) are not static.

Support fees for PSEP programs are projected to rise by at least 4% annually, and state dues are expected to increase by a minimum of 3% each year. The latest support fee amounts can be found here: [www.wiche.edu/tuition-savings/psep/whats-a-psep-award-worth/](http://www.wiche.edu/tuition-savings/psep/whats-a-psep-award-worth/). Without additional funding, it will become increasingly challenging to sustain tuition assistance for students currently in their programs and to offer financial support to more new students each year. To ensure we meet these goals, we urge legislative backing to raise PSEP funding levels in line with these rising costs.

### **Benefits of Hawai'i's Continued Participation in WICHE**

Hawai'i's membership in the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) strengthens the state's higher education and workforce systems through access, affordability, and strategic collaboration across the western region.

WICHE programs – such as the Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE), Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP), and the Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP) – allow our Hawai'i residents the opportunity to pursue degrees at partner institutions in other western states at a reduced cost. This expands educational options and reduces costs for students and families.

Additionally, through programs like PSEP, Hawai'i expands access and support to students interested in pursuing high-demand professional fields – such as dentistry, physical therapy, and veterinary medicine – that are not currently offered in-state. Many graduates return to Hawai'i to serve in local communities, helping to address workforce shortages in these areas.

Membership also gives Hawai'i access to WICHE's policy research, data tools, and collaborative initiatives focused on affordability, transfer pathways, adult learners, and emerging technologies. This engagement ensures Hawai'i remains competitive and aligned with regional and national best practices.

WICHE membership provides a high return on investment through collective problem-solving, research, and workforce development opportunities. Maintaining membership ensures the state remains a full partner in shaping regional solutions that advance equity, economic growth, and educational excellence for Hawai'i's people.