

TOPIC: REVISIONS TO WICHE PROFESSIONAL STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAM (PSEP) POLICY

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I. SUMMARY

Originally, the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP) was designed to allow Colorado residents to attend optometry school at one of the three participating in-region WICHE institutions. Since the University of California at Berkeley's withdrawal in 2004, however, only two western in-region institutions continue to participate in the program, Pacific University and Southern California College of Optometry. Due to the limited institution choices available to students, staff recommend the policy be updated to include out-of-region institutions as potential participants in the program.

II. BACKGROUND

In 1978 the Colorado State Legislature appropriated funds to assist Colorado residents in their study of optometry at schools participating in the WICHE student exchange program. The legislature has continued to provide funding for the program since the State of Colorado does not have an educational institution providing an optometry program, but does have a need for professionals in this field.

The PSEP makes it possible for states to assure that their students have access to professional education at reasonable tuition rates, but without the expense of establishing programs in their own state institutions. This is achieved through providing support fees to students, allowing them to attend out-of-state institutions at a comparable in-state rate.

III. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That the Commission approve the changes to the WICHE/PSEP as outlined in the [attached Colorado Commission on Higher Education, Student Services Policies, Section VI, Part E.](#)

STATUTORY AUTHORITY

C.R.S. 23-1-112 The State of Colorado is a member of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) and is given responsibility to administer the program for the State of Colorado.