



Wyoming Community College Commission *2011 Tuition Review*

Tuition Policy

In October 2006, the Wyoming Community College Commission (WCCC) adopted a long-term tuition policy. This policy guides the Commission in establishing annual community college tuition rates for each of the next five years (2006 through 2011). The guiding principles of this policy encompass five key areas relevant to cost: *accessibility, affordability, predictability, competitiveness, and cost-sharing.*

It is the intent of the Commission that tuition rates are commensurate with economic conditions in Wyoming and surrounding states. Given this intent, the WCCC authorizes a tuition increase of 5% or less¹ among Wyoming's seven community colleges, provided the following criteria are met:

1. Current average resident tuition for Wyoming colleges is 98% or less than the current average resident tuition in the WICHE² states (excluding California and including Nebraska),
2. The ratio of current average resident tuition to Wyoming's median household income is 98% or less than the average ratio for the WICHE states (excluding California and including Nebraska)

After the two above criteria are met, and in-state tuition rates are established, the tuition policy further stipulates that:

1. Full-time tuition is capped at 12 credit hours,
2. Tuition for distance education courses will be the same as for on-site courses,
3. Tuition for non-WUE³, out-of-state students will be 300% of in-state tuition , excepting Nebraska students will be 150% of in-state tuition,
4. Tuition for international students will be 300% of in-state tuition,
5. Tuition for students in WUE states will be 150% of in-state tuition

¹ In the event that a tuition increase greater than five percent is recommended, the WCCC must formally vote to approve the increase.

² Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE)

³ Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE)

Current Findings

Wyoming Community College Commission staff conducted an analysis of 2010-2011 tuition data from WICHE and 2009 Average Median Household Income (MHI)⁴ to determine if the aforementioned tuition policy criteria were, indeed, met. The following analysis concludes that Wyoming community college average tuition, and, tuition-to-income ratios are far below the 98% threshold. Table 1, below, lists income and tuition data for two years, Table 2 summarizes the WY/WICHE tuition ratio, Table 3 reflects the percentage of average MHI needed to fund 2 full time semesters and Table 4 compares the WY tuition/income ratio to WICHE tuition/income ratio. These data will serve as a foundation for further analysis in accordance with the 2006-2011 Tuition Policy.

TABLE 1. Income and Tuition								
WICHE State	2-Year MHI 2005-06	2-Year MHI 2006-07	2-Year MHI 2007-08	2-Year MHI 2008-09	AVG Tuition 2007-08	AVG Tuition 2008-09	AVG Tuition 2009-10	AVG Tuition 2010-11
Alaska	\$57,314	\$61,863	\$66,397	\$67,707	\$3,300	\$3,480	\$3,660	\$3,810
Arizona	\$45,774	\$48,577	\$50,424	\$49,852	\$1,668	\$1,839	\$1,888	\$1,938
Colorado	\$51,334	\$53,614	\$56,103	\$56,212	\$2,112	\$2,354	\$2,506	\$2,732
Hawaii	\$59,636	\$62,453	\$65,480	\$65,656	\$1,512	\$1,704	\$1,896	\$2,640
Idaho	\$42,150	\$44,555	\$46,915	\$46,251	\$1,639	\$1,759	\$1,871	\$1,376
Montana	\$39,964	\$42,079	\$43,593	\$42,988	\$2,257	\$1,953	\$2,299	\$2,306
Nebraska	\$44,662	\$46,280	\$44,389	\$48,525	\$2,160	\$2,094	\$2,218	\$1,890
Nevada	\$51,084	\$54,054	\$55,735	\$54,851	\$1,643	\$1,717	\$1,800	\$1,890
New Mexico	\$39,061	\$41,041	\$42,480	\$43,268	\$1,044	\$1,058	\$1,028	\$1,100
North Dakota	\$41,475	\$42,836	\$44,719	\$46,756	\$2,959	\$3,107	\$3,101	\$3,107
Oregon	\$44,587	\$47,480	\$49,450	\$49,313	\$2,862	\$2,933	\$3,134	\$3,339
South Dakota	\$41,551	\$43,108	\$44,728	\$45,538	\$2,331	\$2,475	\$2,299	\$2,835
Utah	\$49,622	\$53,209	\$55,886	\$55,875	\$1,956	\$2,051	\$2,199	\$2,382
Washington	\$50,923	\$54,087	\$56,835	\$57,313	\$2,723	\$2,769	\$2,926	\$3,130
AVERAGES	\$47,081	\$49,660	\$51,652	\$52,150	\$2,155	\$2,235	\$2,345	\$2,463
Wyoming	\$46,813	\$49,577	\$52,469	\$52,936	\$1,488	\$1,560	\$1,632	\$1,632

TABLE 2. Tuition Ratios	
WY/WICHE Tuition Ratios	
Average WY Tuition: Average WICHE Tuition	
2007-08 - 69.06%	
2008-09 - 69.83%	
2009-10 - 69.75%	
2010-11 - 66.26%	

TABLE 3. Tuition/ MHI Ratios	
% of Average MHI Needed to Fund Full-Time Resident Tuition for 2 Semesters	
WY	WICHE
2007-08 - 3.18%	2007-08 - 4.58%
2008-09 - 3.15%	2008-09 - 4.50%
2009-10 - 3.11%	2009-10 - 4.54%
2010-11 - 3.08%	2010-11 - 4.72%

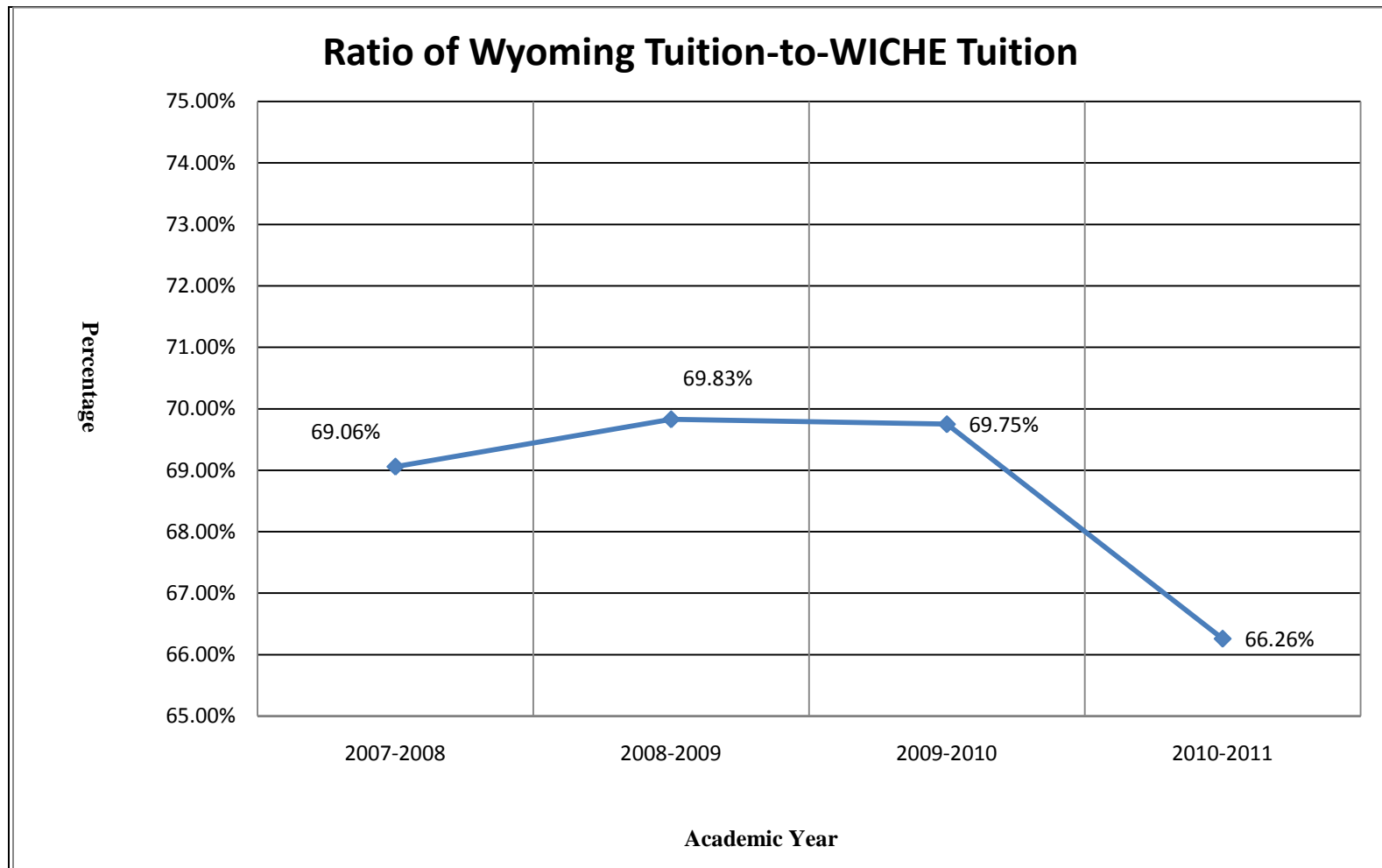
TABLE 4. Tuition/Income Affordability Ratios	
WY TUITION/INCOME RATIO: WICHE TUITION/INCOME RATIO	
2007-08 - 72.72%	
2008-09 - 70.00%	
2009-10 - 69.11%	
2010-11 - 65.25%	

⁴ US Census Bureau 2009 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Ratio of Wyoming Tuition-to-WICHE Average Tuition

In comparing average Wyoming tuition to average WICHE tuition (excluding California and including Nebraska), for the 2010-2011 academic year, the ratio calculated to 66.26%. This ratio is lower than the 2009-2010 ratio of 69.75%.

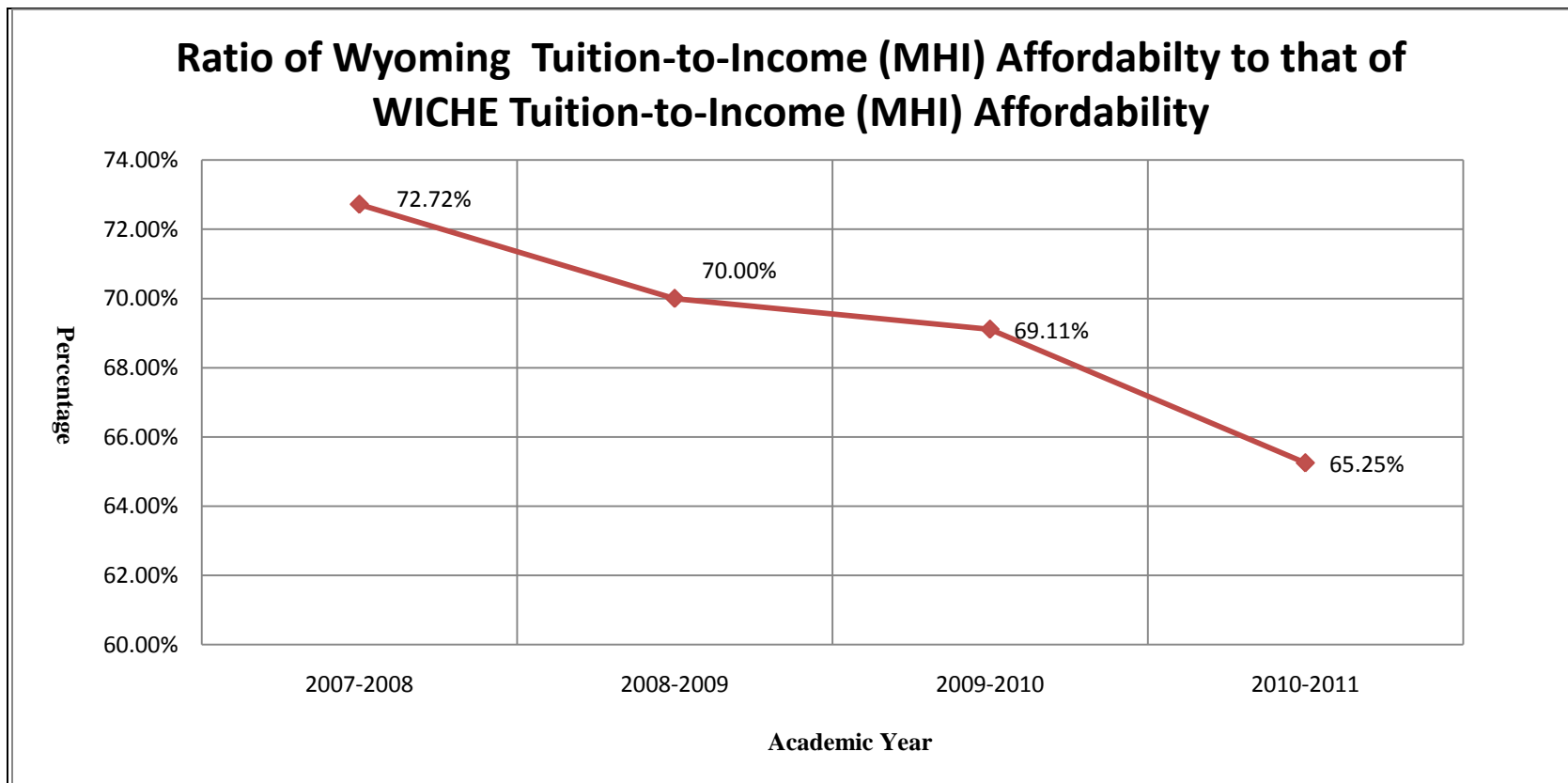
The average tuition for the two-year public WICHE institutions increased by 5.03% from 2009-10 to 2010-11. For the same period, the tuition for Wyoming's community colleges did not increase.



Ratio of Income-to-Tuition Affordability

In comparing the ratios of average tuition rates to median household income (MHI) for Wyoming to that of WICHE states (excluding California and including Nebraska) in 2010-11, the final ratio was 65.25%, a decrease from the 2009-10 ratio of 69.11%.

The average median household income of the WICHE states combined increased by .97% from 2007-08 to 2008-2009. During the same period, median household income in Wyoming increased by .89%.



Possible Tuition Increase

The above analysis indicates that Wyoming community college tuition rates in 2010-11 were not commensurate with economic conditions in Wyoming and surrounding states. For the four-year periods examined in the analysis, Wyoming's tuition and income ratios were less than those of the WICHE states. However, this span of data indicates that Wyoming tuition rates are not holding steady, especially in comparison to the increasing WICHE tuition rates. Given this analysis, a moderate tuition rate increase of 4.5% per credit hour, for the 2011-12 academic year, can be considered. This possible increase remains lower than the 5.03% average tuition increase in the WICHE states between 2009-10 and 2010-11.

Should a 4.5% increase in tuition be approved⁵, the following tuition schedule will apply if full time credit hours remain capped at 12 hours per semester for the 2011-12 academic year:

Residency Classification	2010-11 Part-time tuition rate (up to 12 hours)	2010-11 Annual full-time tuition rate (12 hours or more per semester)	2011-12* Part-time tuition rate ⁶ (up to 12 hours)	2011-12* Annual full-time tuition rate (12 hours or more per semester)
Wyoming residents	\$68/credit hour	\$1632	\$71/credit hour	\$1,704
WUE and Nebraska students	\$102/credit hour	\$2,448	\$107/credit hour	\$2,568
Non-residents	\$204/credit hour	\$4,896	\$213/credit hour	\$5,112

Possible Credit Hour Cap Increase

If tuition is increased by 4.5% per credit hour, and the tuition cap is increased from 12 to 13 hours per semester, resident students taking 13 hours or more per semester would pay an additional \$142.00 annually. The following tuition schedule would apply:

Residency Classification	2010-11 Part-time tuition rate (up to 12 hours)	2010-11 Annual full-time tuition rate (12 hours or more per semester)	2011-12* Part-time tuition rate ⁷ (up to 13 hours)	2011-12* Annual full-time tuition rate (13 hours or more per semester)
Wyoming residents	\$68/credit hour	\$1,632	\$71/credit hour	\$1,846
WUE and Nebraska students	\$102/credit hour	\$2,448	\$107/credit hour	\$2,782
Non-residents	\$204/credit hour	\$4,896	\$213/credit hour	\$5,538

⁵ The Wyoming Community College Commission endorsed this recommendation on December 8, 2010.

⁶ When increased, credit hour tuition rates are rounded to the nearest dollar.

⁷ When increased, credit hour tuition rates are rounded to the nearest dollar.

If tuition is increased by 4.5% per credit hour, and the tuition cap is increased from 12 to 15 hours per semester, resident students taking 15 hours or more per semester would pay an additional \$426.00 annually. The following tuition schedule would apply:

Residency Classification	2010-11 Part-time tuition rate (up to 12 hours)	2010-11 Annual full-time tuition rate (12 hours or more per semester)	2011-12* Part-time tuition rate ⁸ (up to 15 hours)	2011-12* Annual full-time tuition rate (15 hours or more per semester)
Wyoming residents	\$68/credit hour	\$1,632	\$71/credit hour	\$2,130
WUE and Nebraska students	\$102/credit hour	\$2,448	\$107/credit hour	\$3,210
Non-residents	\$204/credit hour	\$4,896	\$213/credit hour	\$6,390

*4.5% per credit hour increase

Analysis conducted by George Pitt, Policy Analyst, WCCC – November 2010

⁸ When increased, credit hour tuition rates are rounded to the nearest dollar.