



Wyoming Community College Commission 2015 Tuition Review

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

Tuition Policy

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.

Current Findings

Wyoming Community College Commission staff conducted an analysis of 2014-2015 tuition data from WICHE and 2012-2013 two-year 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 lists income and tuition data, while Table 2 reflects the

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)

⁴ US Census Bureau 2010 American Community Survey 2-Year Estimates

percentage of average MHI needed to fund full-time student tuition for two semesters. Table 3 summarizes the WY/WICHE tuition ratio, 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: Median Household Income and Tuition Rates

WICHE State	2-Year MHI '09-'10	2-Year MHI '10-'11	2-Year MHI '11-'12	2-Year MHI '12-'13	Average 2011-12 Tuition	Average 2012-13 Tuition	Average 2013-14 Tuition	Average 2014-15 Tuition
Alaska	\$63,254	\$59,775	\$61,140	\$62,855	\$3,990	\$4,260	\$4,380	\$0**
Arizona	\$48,971	\$49,511	\$48,340	\$49,165	\$2,104	\$2,149	\$2,291	\$2,404
Colorado	\$61,479	\$61,643	\$58,555	\$60,729	\$2,991	\$3,179	\$3,354	\$3,496
Hawaii	\$61,219	\$61,491	\$58,272	\$59,244	\$2,910	\$3,030	\$3,180	\$3,420
Idaho	\$49,736	\$49,000	\$48,186	\$50,193	\$2,283	\$2,339	\$2,517	\$2,658
Montana	\$43,384	\$42,295	\$43,104	\$44,938	\$2,346	\$2,358	\$2,366	\$2,401
Nebraska	\$54,062	\$56,035	\$54,487	\$53,364	\$1,640	\$1,762	\$1,708	\$1,762
Nevada	\$54,421	\$50,972	\$47,680	\$46,695	\$2,078	\$2,265	\$2,535	\$2,535
New Mexico	\$47,080	\$45,195	\$43,142	\$43,091	\$1,221	\$1,243	\$1,263	\$1,287
North Dakota	\$53,384	\$55,626	\$56,653	\$54,732	\$3,147	\$3,187	\$3,256	\$3,367
Oregon	\$52,886	\$52,946	\$52,189	\$54,417	\$3,663	\$3,867	\$4,012	\$4,085
South Dakota	\$48,279	\$47,985	\$48,812	\$52,293	\$3,029	\$3,177	\$3,276	\$3,276
Utah	\$61,137	\$58,182	\$57,497	\$61,078	\$2,541	\$2,692	\$2,835	\$2,980
Washington	\$61,894	\$58,951	\$60,112	\$61,598	\$3,540	\$3,944	\$3,967	\$3,969
AVERAGES	\$54,370	\$53,543	\$52,726	\$53,855	\$2,677	\$2,818	\$2,924	\$2,895
Wyoming	\$55,473	\$55,310	\$56,580	\$57,024	\$1,704	\$1,800	\$1,896	\$1,992

** The one separately accredited community college in Alaska (Prince William Sounds Community College) was placed under the University of Alaska Anchorage umbrella in June 2014.

Table 2: Tuition/MHI Ratios

WY		WICHE	
Year ¹	Ratio	Year ¹	Ratio
2010-11	2.89%	2010-11	4.51%
2011-12	3.07%	2011-12	4.92%
2012-13	3.25%	2012-13	5.26%
2013-14	3.35%	2013-14	5.55%
2014-15	3.49%	2014-15	5.38%

¹ Tuition represents 2010-2015 data, while MHI data lags by 2 years and covers 2008-2013

Table 3: Wyoming/WICHE Tuition Ratios

Year	Ratio
2010-11	64.99%
2011-12	63.65%
2012-13	63.88%
2013-14	64.84%
2014-15	68.81%

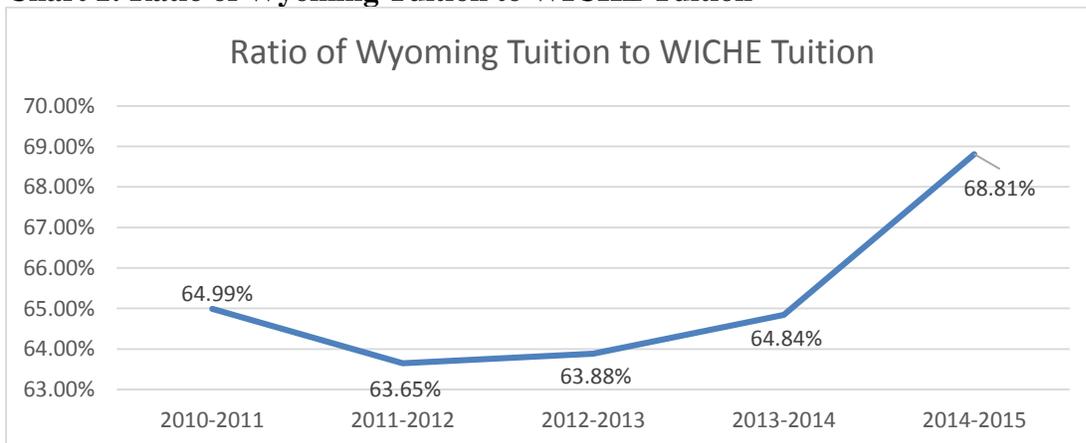
Table 4: Affordability Ratios

Year	Tuition/Income Ratio
2010-11	63.97%
2011-12	62.39%
2012-13	61.83%
2013-14	60.43%
2014-15	64.98%

Ratio of Wyoming Tuition-to-WICHE Average Tuition

A comparison of average Wyoming tuition to average WICHE tuition (excluding California and Alaska and including Nebraska), for the 2014-2015 academic year, indicates that Wyoming community college students pay 68.81% of that of average WICHE state community colleges. This ratio has increased for Wyoming from the 2013-2014 ratio of 64.84%. Chart 1 illustrates that the trend of Wyoming to WICHE tuition rates is increasing. However, it should be noted, the one separately accredited community college in Alaska was placed under the University of Alaska Anchorage umbrella in June 2014 which likely decreased the average tuition of the WICHE area. The average tuition in Alaska had been the highest state tuition rate (in the WICHE area) in previous years and figuring the rate from last year for Alaska into this year's WICHE average would have caused a 2.63% increase in average WICHE tuition.

Chart 1: Ratio of Wyoming Tuition to WICHE Tuition



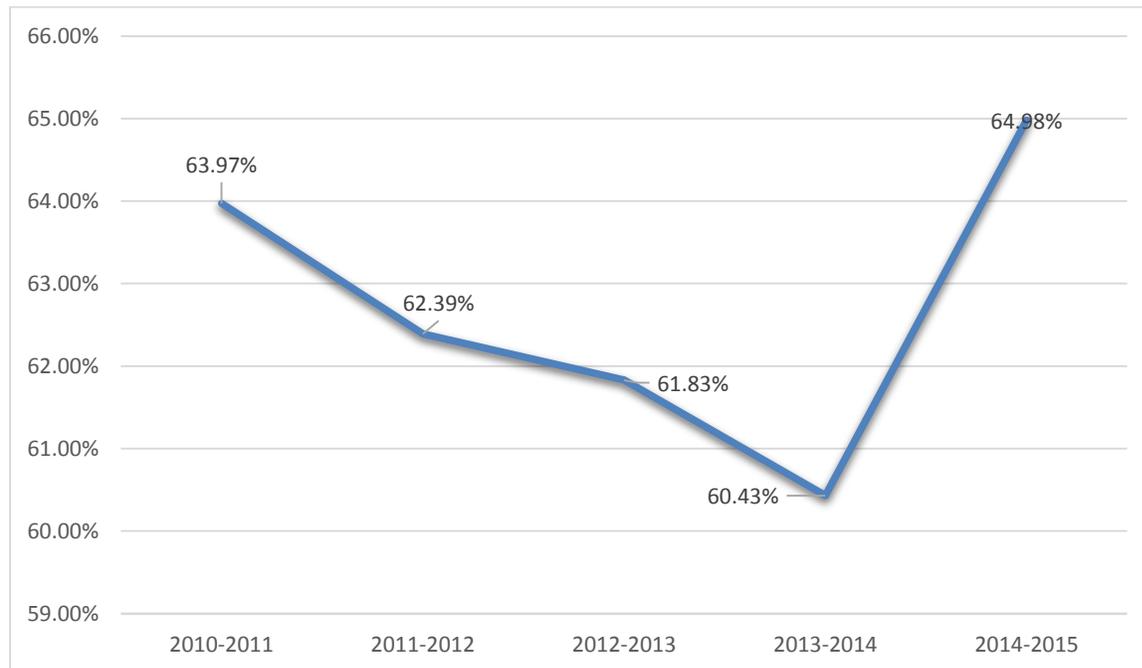
With the change to Alaska and other state tuition changes, the average tuition for the two-year public WICHE institutions decreased by .99% from 2013-14 to 2014-15, down from last year's increase of 3.76%. For the same period, the tuition for Wyoming's community colleges increased 5%.

Ratio of Tuition-to-Income 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 2012-13, the final ratio was 64.98%, an increase from the 2011-12 ratio of 60.43%.

The average median household income of the WICHE states combined increased by 2.14% from 2011-12 to 2012-2013. During the same period, median household income in Wyoming increased by .78%.

Chart 2: Ratio of Wyoming Tuition-to-Income (MHI) Affordability to WICHE Tuition-to-Income (MHI) Affordability



Wyoming Tuition Analysis and Recommendation

The above analysis indicates that the Wyoming community college tuition rate in 2014-2015 remains below that of the surrounding states in WICHE territory. For the 5 one-year periods examined in the analysis, Wyoming's tuition and income ratios were less than those of the WICHE states. Wyoming's tuition rates have increased 20.99% from 2010-11 to 2014-15, whereas WICHE's tuition rates have increased 15.29% for the same period of time. (If Alaska were included using the tuition for last year, the increase would have been 19.51%.)

Despite this analysis, staff does not recommend an increase to current in-state or non-resident student Wyoming tuition this year. Commission staff intends to perform a study to analyze

current policy and procedure in order to develop a long-term plan which would encourage program completion and how tuition is calculated. A new tuition policy recommendation will be developed with the consideration of themes such as accessibility, affordability, predictability, competitiveness and cost-sharing. With no increase for 2015-2016, Wyoming community college tuition rates will remain below that of surrounding states and will support current and enrolling students over the next year.