

# Iowa Highlights

2015-2016

## Iowa Key to Shaping the Compact's Initiatives

1. Iowa passed authorizing legislation in 2005 to join the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC), which was created in 1991.
2. A product of Midwestern legislators, MHEC was created through actions of the Midwestern Legislative Conference of The Council of State Governments.
3. Bob Downer, former Iowa Board of Regents member, served as commission chair from 2010-2011.
4. Over 20 Iowans, including commissioners, commissioner alternates, and members of advisory program committees, provide significant direction for MHEC programs and services.

## Iowa Benefits from Participation in MHEC Programs and Services

1. Entities in MHEC member states have saved over \$516 million since the Compact was founded in 1991, by using MHEC purchasing contracts and the MHEC property insurance program.
2. Iowa higher education institutions (including public and private not-for-profit), school districts, and state and local governments have achieved cost savings of over \$6.6 million since 2005, by using MHEC's cost savings and student exchange programs. In FY16, they achieved savings of over \$317,000
3. Iowa received nearly a 3-fold return on its MHEC investment for FY16 when comparing total savings to the state's annual commitment (dues).
4. **Technology Initiatives:** In FY16, Iowa entities realized over \$317,000 in cost savings by purchasing over \$3 million in technology hardware, software, and services. Cumulatively, they have saved over \$6 million. Serving on the Technologies Committee that determines which hardware, software, and services MHEC will pursue are: Joshua Mack, North Iowa Area Community College; Marty Mark, University of Northern Iowa; and Jeff Nelsen, Iowa Central Community College.
5. **State Authorization:** Iowa became the eighth state to become a member of the Midwestern-State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (M-SARA). Gretchen Bartelson, Northwest Iowa Community College; and Sue Huppert, Des Moines University, serve on the M-SARA Regional Steering Committee. Ms. Bartelson serves as chair of the M-SARA Regional Steering Committee.
6. **Property Insurance:** MHEC's Master Property Program (MPP) insures over 160 campuses nationwide with property values exceeding \$92 billion dollars, saving participating MHEC member states over \$5.5 million in FY16. The University of Northern Iowa (UNI) is the first Iowa institution to participate in the MPP. UNI will be determining an appointee to the MPP Leadership Committee in consultation with the MHEC president.

## Commissioners



Connie Hornbeck  
Treasurer  
Iowa Association of  
Community College  
Trustees



Andrew Baumert  
VP Marketing & Outreach  
Iowa Association of  
Independent Colleges  
and Univs. (Alternate)



Tim Kraayenbrink  
Chair, Education  
Appropriations  
Subcommittee  
Iowa Legislature



Wally Horn  
Senator  
Iowa Legislature  
(Alternate)



Olivia Madison  
Professor Emerita and  
Dean Emerita of  
Library Services  
Iowa State University



Karen Misjak  
Executive Director  
Iowa College Student  
Aid Commission  
(Alternate)



Katie Mulholland  
President Pro Tem  
Board of Regents  
State of Iowa



Brent Siegrist  
Director  
Iowa Area Education  
Agencies  
(Alternate)



OPEN  
Representative  
Iowa Legislature



Sharon Steckman  
Representative  
Iowa Legislature  
(Alternate)



## Midwestern Higher Education Compact

105 Fifth Avenue South, Suite 450, Minneapolis, MN 55401

Phone: 612-677-2777 Fax: 612-767-3353 E-mail: [mhec@mhec.org](mailto:mhec@mhec.org)

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## Iowa Benefits from Participation in MHEC Programs and Services (continued)

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7. **Military Credit:** The Multi-State Collaborative on Military Credit has provided grant funds of \$30,000 to Indiana to support their state efforts in translating competencies acquired through military training and experiences into milestones toward completing a college degree or earning a certificate or license. Diana Gonzalez, Iowa Board of Regents, serves on the MCMC Steering Committee. Additional Iowans serve on work groups.

## Potential Savings or Benefits of Program Participation for Iowa

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1. Since the membership is a state membership, not only can higher education institutions use MHEC's purchasing contracts, but school districts, state and local governments, and not-for-profit entities can also use most of the MHEC purchasing contracts.
2. MHEC is a statutorily created entity in each member state. The Compact conducts competitive sourcing events and negotiates contract terms and conditions, thereby allowing flexibility for state and local entities to tailor MHEC contracts to their needs without having to incur the cost of rebidding for the products or services covered in MHEC contracts.
3. **Student Insurance Solutions:** MHECare, the student health collaborative, provides member institutions with sustainable student health insurance solutions and helps institutions support the student learning experience by providing protection from unexpected medical expenses.
4. **Midwest Student Exchange Program:** Nine of the twelve MHEC states participate in MHEC's Midwest Student Exchange Program (MSEP). Over 10,000 students from these nine states participated in the program in FY16. MSEP is designed to offer institutions a flexible exchange program to meet their enrollment needs and to save students money. Students and families participating in MSEP saved nearly \$60 million in tuition in FY16, and over \$344 million since the program's inception.

## Policy Research Keeps Iowans Informed

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1. MHEC provides reliable and objective evaluations of the PK-16 system in Iowa.
  - » **Higher Education in Focus: Selected Performance Indicators.** This biennial report provides key performance indicators for Iowa relevant to the goal of increasing educational attainment. Performance indicators are categorized within six dimensions: Preparation, Participation, Affordability, Completion, Equity, and Finance.
  - » **The Effectiveness and Efficiency of Postsecondary Institutions in the United States: 2010-2012 Baseline Results.** This brief evaluates the extent to which postsecondary institutions in Iowa are effective and efficient. Institutions are deemed effective if their graduation rates exceed what would be expected given the types of students served and other attributes. Institutional efficiency is estimated as the difference between actual educational expenditures and the expenditures that would be predicted from degree production levels, faculty attributes, and location. The report helps policymakers in Iowa identify highly effective institutions that make efficient use of taxpayer dollars and promote closer examination of the policies and practices that constitute their highly effective campuses.
2. MHEC informs policymaking on college readiness in Iowa.
  - » **Faculty Qualification Policies and Strategies Relevant to Dual Enrollment Programs: An Analysis of States and Regional Accreditation Agencies.** This report examines state and regional accreditation policies relevant to faculty qualifications for dual enrollment programs. The report informs policymaking in Iowa by identifying the key attributes of policies across the nation and describing some of the state strategies for increasing the number of in-service teachers qualified to teach dual enrollment courses.
  - » **Blueprint for College Readiness.** This report helps K-12 and higher education leaders in Iowa determine which policies should be adopted to promote college readiness. Policy recommendations are made in relation to college and career readiness definitions, college readiness standards and assessments, graduation requirements, accountability, admissions standards, statewide remedial and placement policies, transfer, and a data pipeline and process for reporting.

## Policy Research Keeps Iowans Informed (continued)

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- » ***The Traditional Approach to Developmental Education.*** This report provides a primer on developmental education and summarizes recent research on the effects of remedial assignment, enrollment, and completion. Among the policy implications, the report finds that the disparities in remedial enrollment by ethnicity and income mirror the achievement gaps observed in the PK-12 sector. This suggests that the problem of high enrollment in remedial education during college must be partly addressed in the PK-12 sector. Two promising interventions for promoting PK-16 alignment are dual enrollment and early skills assessment.
3. MHEC helps institutional leaders and policymakers in Iowa identify best practices for improving educational quality and degree completion rates.
- » ***Transparent Pathways, Clear Outcomes: Using Disciplinary Tuning to Improve Teaching, Learning, and Student Success.*** “Tuning” is a process through which faculty members create shared understandings of the knowledge and transferable skills students in specific academic disciplines and professional fields must demonstrate upon completion of their degrees. The process helps to clarify to students, parents, and policymakers what degree holders know, understand, and are able to do.
  - » ***Determinants of Student Success: An Integrative Perspective to Orient Policy and Practice*** elaborates on three social-psychological factors that influence student success during college: goal commitment, academic engagement, and social identification.
  - » ***Effective Pedagogy*** examines cooperative or collaborative learning involving small groups of students, problem-based learning, service learning, mastery learning, and computer-based instruction.
  - » ***Financial Aid*** summarizes key findings from research to inform institutional policy regarding institutional grant aid and work-study programs.
  - » ***Faculty Policy*** examines key issues that confront institutional leaders in creating faculty policies conducive to student success, including employment status, faculty roles and reward systems, and faculty development.
  - » ***Developmental Education*** provides a summary of research on policy and program reforms that may improve developmental education and the outcomes of underprepared students, including establishing appropriate program requirements, refining the student placement process, improving the quality of developmental curricula, and incorporating support services.
  - » ***Software Solutions*** provides an overview of student success software and summarizes findings from the nascent body of student outcomes research. Three types of software solutions are examined: academic planning systems, task engagement systems, and early alert systems. Several campus practices are then identified that may facilitate software adoption.
  - » ***Counseling Services*** provides an overview of mental health issues and counseling services on college campuses. Common prevention and treatment programs are described with particular attention to innovative campus-wide programs. The brief concludes with a set of recommended practices to improve the effectiveness of counseling services on campus.
4. MHEC informs policy on the preparation of college graduates for gainful employment.
- » ***The Occupational Relevance of a College Education: An Examination of Education-Job Match among Bachelor’s Degree Recipients.*** This research brief provides a national account of whether recent college alumni attain employment congruent with their academic major, reasons for working outside of one’s major field, and possible consequences for job satisfaction. The brief encourages policymakers in Iowa and elsewhere to develop indicators of education-job match that reflect the relevance of a college education for formal employment; implement “Tuning” programs when necessary; raise admissions standards for majors with projected market saturation; and increase student intentionality in the major selection process.
5. MHEC provides new legislators and board members in Iowa with background information on higher education.
- » ***State Constitutional Provisions and Higher Education Governance.*** This report provides an overview of state constitutional provisions for higher education and state approaches to higher education governance across the nation.

## Opportunity to Discuss the Issues in Iowa

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1. Based on the many ideas that MHEC Commissioners and Commissioner Alternates submitted in late August of 2015, a survey was created with potential policy topics for our research, program initiatives, and professional development. Survey respondents evaluated the need for additional knowledge on various topics, identified the top three topics of interest, and selected the most helpful resource formats. The collective results were used to determine which policy topics MHEC should prioritize. Commissioners at the MHEC annual commission meeting voted to focus on affordability initiatives during the next fiscal year.
2. MHEC convenes institutional leaders and policymakers to discuss critical issues confronting Iowa, the region, and the nation.
  - » MHEC Commissioners were active in discussions in 2015 about the new Higher Learning Commission (HLC) faculty qualifications revised policy which was to take effect in July 2016. This policy especially impacted smaller and rural school districts. Considering MHEC's efforts, the HLC allowed for institutions with dual credit programs to apply for an extension to implement the new policy by 2022.
3. MHEC provides reliable and objective evaluations of the PK-16 system in Iowa.
4. During the legislative session MHEC convenes a group of state leaders including MHEC commissioners, legislative leaders, higher education leaders, K-12 representatives, and executive branch officials to discuss MHEC programs and also to receive input about MHEC services and state issues.
5. The locations of MHEC commission meetings rotate among the member states, showcasing each state's education initiatives to an audience comprised of Midwestern legislators and education leaders. MHEC held its annual commission meeting and policy summit in Iowa City in November 2011 and November 2007.
6. All travel and lodging expenses for commissioners who attend Compact meetings are paid by the Midwestern Higher Education Compact.

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