

# Nebraska Highlights 2022-2023

## Nebraska's Engagement

- 33-Year Partnership.** Nebraska enacted authorizing legislation to join the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC) when it was created in 1991.
- About MHEC.** MHEC brings together higher education leaders and policymakers from Nebraska and 11 other Midwestern states to develop and support best practices, collaborative efforts, and cost-saving opportunities. Through these efforts, it works to ensure strong, equitable postsecondary educational opportunities and outcomes for all.
- Nebraska Leadership.** Commissioners, commissioner alternates, and members of advisory program committees provide direction for MHEC programs and services.

## How the Compact Benefits Nebraska

- \$1.57M in Savings.** In 2023, Nebraska colleges, universities, school districts, and state and local governments realized more than \$1.57M in cost savings through MHEC's contracts and programs, while Nebraska citizens saved over \$4.18M through the Midwest Student Exchange Program. Since 1991, Nebraska entities have saved over \$32.45M.
- Return on Nebraska's Investment.** The State of Nebraska received nearly a 14-fold return on its annual compact membership commitment of \$115,000.
  - » **Technology Contracts.** Nebraska institutions saved more than \$509,000 by purchasing \$5.66M in technology hardware, software, and services through MHEC-negotiated contracts.
  - » **Distance Education.** By participating in the Midwestern-State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (M-SARA), Nebraska saved approximately \$1.07M. Without M-SARA, institutions must undertake a costly state-by-state, institution-by-institution approach.
  - » **Insurance.** The University of Nebraska System participates in MHEC's student health solutions, MHECare. MHEC continues to explore other opportunities to save money and reduce risk in the areas of insurance.
  - » **Tuition Reciprocity.** Nebraska students and their families who participated in the Midwest Student Exchange Program saved more than \$4.18M in tuition.
- Credentials and Learner Records.** Nebraska participated in MHEC's Midwestern Credential Transparency Alliance initiative. Staff from the Nebraska Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education participated actively in meetings and on the Pathways Action Team, a working group dedicated to exploring the benefits of credential transparency for promoting career pathways.
- Open Educational Resources.** The University of Nebraska, in partnership with Creative Commons, launched a microcredential on open licensing, which was presented at Creative Commons' conference in October 2023. Nebraska will be using the Hewlett grant funding provided through MHEC to support the addition of the postsecondary institutions to Nebraska's OER Hub on ISKME's OER Commons, and to send a small number of individuals to Creative Commons Certificate training.

## Commissioners



**John Cavanaugh**  
State Senator  
Nebraska Legislature



**Deborah A. Frison**  
Member  
Coordinating Commission  
for Postsecondary  
Education



**Chris Kabourek**  
Interim President; Sr VP  
for Bus & Finance | CFO  
U of NE System



**Grant Latimer**  
Policy Advisor to  
Governor Jim Pillen  
State of Nebraska



**Lynne Walz**  
State Senator  
Nebraska Legislature



**Michael Baumgartner**  
Executive Director  
Coordinating Commission  
for Postsecondary  
Education  
(alternate)

# Midwestern Higher Education Compact Priorities

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## FOSTERING INNOVATION, EFFICIENCY, & EFFECTIVENESS

*The Compact serves as an incubator, providing a platform to discuss opportunities and pilot potential solutions.*

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1. **Innovative Best Practices.** MHEC shares effective solutions to challenges identified by policymakers and higher education leaders. Discussion topics have included creating stronger and stable finance systems that help colleges to better meet pressing state interests and needs, rebounding from the pandemic, addressing federal relief, and campus mental health.
2. **Open Educational Resources.** MHEC coordinates efforts to expand access to openly licensed textbooks and learning materials that are accessible via the Internet at little or no cost to students.
3. **Credential Transparency.** MHEC brings states together to discuss and recommend initiatives related to the complex and evolving landscape of credentials and learner records.
4. **Timely Research & Policy.** Member states direct and receive high-priority access to research on pressing topics such as college readiness, affordability and finance, and student success.
5. **Interactive Dashboard.** MHEC's online tool provides state-by-state data on key performance indicators including preparation, participation, affordability, completion, finance, and workforce.

## DEVELOPING COLLABORATIVE SOLUTIONS TO REGIONAL PROBLEMS

*MHEC takes on projects and issues that are too large or expensive for one state to do alone, working jointly to make the Midwest region stronger and more competitive.*

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1. **Convenings.** MHEC convenes diverse leaders to discuss and identify critical issues in higher education, bringing together state leaders, policymakers and their staff, and campus experts such as CIOs, risk managers, librarians, health leaders, and compliance officers.
2. **State Visits.** MHEC leaders visit each state annually during its legislative session to learn more about and address key issues affecting the state's economy and higher education.
3. **Dual and Concurrent Enrollment.** MHEC helps Midwestern states navigate new accreditation standards for concurrent enrollment set by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) for qualifying high school teachers to teach concurrent enrollment courses. Through consistent communication with HLC and work with a regional advisory group, MHEC brings consistency to instructor qualification practices across the Midwest.
4. **Tuition Reciprocity.** MHEC provides a Midwest tuition reciprocity program whereby public institutions agree to charge students in participating states no more than 150 percent of their in-state resident tuition and private institutions offer a 10 percent reduction in their tuition rates. This program saves families thousands of dollars and keeps students in the Midwest.
5. **Distance Education.** MHEC manages a regional approach to authorizing Midwestern states and institutions to regulate, approve, and oversee the delivery of interstate online education. This approach, part of the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA), provides a streamlined process that results in cost savings for postsecondary institutions and improved access to online education for students.

## DRIVING COST SAVINGS & BUSINESS SOLUTIONS

*MHEC programs and contracts result in tremendous cost savings for institutions, states, and students. The Compact solves key business problems and protects investment in higher education by collaborating and reducing risk.*

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1. **Competitive Sourcing.** MHEC leads competitive sourcing for essential goods and services such as insurance and technology. In doing so, MHEC saves time and money for higher education institutions. As a lead public agency, MHEC negotiates flexible, cooperative contracts, and streamlines procurement processes. The negotiated contracts may be tailored to the purchaser's needs.
2. **Technology Contracts.** MHEC leverages the combined hardware, software, and services volume of campuses and local governments in member states to reach favorable agreements with technology vendors. In FY23, member states saved an estimated \$31.59M with technology purchases of more than \$351.03M.
3. **Student Health Solutions.** MHEC offers institutions options for fully insured, school-sponsored health plans. MHEC's responsive approach resulted in the recent addition of virtual mental health services for students.