A PROPOSED DEGREE APPROVAL MODEL FOR LICENSED AND REGULATED FIELDS

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PRESENTERS' INSTITUTION

- Western Governors University
    - Students in all states and territories of the US (including military)
    - Regional Accreditation
    - Programmatic Accreditation (NCATE/CAEP, CCNE, CAHIM)
    - Sought authorization in all states in 2010; now a SARA institution
    - Four colleges
        - College of Information Technology
        - College of Business
        - College of Health Professions
        - Teachers College

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NATIONAL SPOTLIGHT

- **The National Adult Learner Coalition**
    - Whitepaper: Strengthening America's Economy By Expanding Educational Opportunities For Working Adults
    - Highlighting Student Mobility and Financial Aid
- **Example State Action**
    - VA H 2262 (Online Virginia Network Authority)
    - TN H1160 (admission standards mirroring national body)
    - CT H 5707 (neighboring state reciprocity)
    - KY Board of Education report (inter-district transfer)

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PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

- Current Difficulties

- Four Foundations

- Precedents in other areas

- Model

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CURRENT DIFFICULTIES

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CURRENT DIFFICULTIES:
STATE AUTHORITIES

- Institutional
  - Volume of requests
  - Oversight of out-of-state institutions
  - Application of new models for program delivery

- Student
  - Consumer Protection
  - Program Outcomes
- Federal requirements
  - Department of Education
  - Workforce, Labor, and related

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CURRENT DIFFICULTIES:
INSTITUTIONS

- Authorities
  - Variation among processes
  - Misunderstandings and Misinformation
  - Consumer Protection against Other Institutions (lumping)
  - Cost can prevent access for students
- Students
  - Mobility between and among states (sister cities)
  - Access to authorized, accredited, and approved programs
  - Cost of attendance

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BEYOND RECOGNITION:
AUTHORIZATION

- NC-SARA provides:

  - Rigorous accountability in home state

  - Equal protection for students across all member states

  - Streamlined administration for state authorities

  - Consumer protection across member states

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BEYOND RECOGNITION:
PROGRAM APPROVAL

- Four foundations of program approval in regulated fields:

  - Identified Knowledge

  - Address Employment Needs

  - Consumer Protection in Preparation (students)

  - Public Protection in Practice (professionals)

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FOUR FOUNDATIONS

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IDENTIFIED KNOWLEDGE

A trusted reciprocity model requires an agreement on the base content, compentencies, skills, and aptitudes that candidates must possess to be practitioners.

- National bodies
- Standards-based requirements
- State Authority and Institutional participation in review

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ADDRESS EMPLOYMENT NEEDS

A reciprocity model helps to meet local shortages in regulated areas and mobility for students seeking employment.

- Nursing
- Teachers
- Retirement of licensed professionals in regulated fields

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CONSUMER PROTECTION (STUDENTS)

Students pursue legal remedies and redress with authorities in their state of residence through reciprocal approvals.

- Bad actors are identified systemically
- Student protections are local to the student, not institution
- Combined authority of AGs in all member states

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PUBLIC PROTECTION (PROFESSIONALS)

Licensed practioners remain accountable to local authority through boards, commission, or other designated authorities.

- Teachers responsible to boards of education
- Accountants responsible to boards of accountancy
- Admission based on examination, equal access to preparation

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PRECEDENTS IN OTHER AREAS

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PRECEDENT IN LEGAL EDUCATION

- American Bar Association
  - Curriculum
  - Institutional oversight
  - Consumer protection
- State Bars
  - Content examination
  - Professional Discipline
  - Consumer concerns channel (practitioner oversight)

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ACCREDITING BODIES - NATIONAL

- Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP)
- Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE)
- National Association of State Boards of Accounting (NASBA)* (guidance, not accreditation)

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PROGRAM APPROVAL RECIPROCITY

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MODEL

- State approval of programs offered by in-state institutions

- Reciprocity for acceptance of preparation program

- Professional practice standards remain with individual states

- Shared oversight:
  - Accreditor:
    - Identified knowledge
    - Employment needs
  - State Authorities:
    - Consumer protection
    - Public protection

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MODEL

- Accreditor establishes standards and requirements for:
  - Identified Knowledge
  - Consumer Protection in Preparation (students)

- State Authorities can focus resources on:
  - Address Employment Needs
  - Public Protection in Practice (professionals)

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CONCLUSION

Established on the four foundations, a reciprocal program approval model, balancing the expertise of national accrediting bodies, institutional innovation, and state authority provides:

- Efficiencies in state use of resources
- Student choice and mobility
- Institutional certainty across jurisdictions
- Consumer (student) protection across agreement members
- Public protection local with equal access to preparation

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