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

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)
PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

• Current Difficulties
• Four Foundations
• Precedents in other areas
• Model

CURRENT DIFFICULTIES

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
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

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

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)
FOUR FOUNDATIONS

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

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

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
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

PUBLIC PROTECTION (PROFESSIONALS)

Licensed practitioners 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

PRECEDENTS IN OTHER AREAS
PRECEDENT IN LEGAL EDUCATION

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

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)

PROGRAM APPROVAL
RECIPROCITY
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

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)

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