SARA
State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement for Distance Education

We're Way Past the “Easy Stuff” – The Continuing Evolution of SARA
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SARA Member States

[Bar chart showing the growth of SARA member states over time]
Participating Institutions

![Pie chart showing institutions by sector](chart.jpg)

Business/Financial Status of the SARA Initiative

- NC-SARA is now a free-standing 501(c)(3) non-profit entity, with fully separate business functions.
- SARA work by all SARA partners (NC-SARA, MHEC, NEBHE, SREB and WICHE) is now fully dependent on fee revenue.
- Current and projected revenues are sufficient to support SARA.
- Consequently, NC-SARA has determined to keep fees at current levels through June, 2018.

SARA Goals: How are we doing?

SARA establishes a state-level reciprocity process that is making state authorization:
- more efficient, effective, and uniform in regard to necessary and reasonable standards of practice that could span states;
- more effective in dealing with quality and integrity issues that have arisen in some online/distance education offerings; and
- less costly for states and institutions and, thereby, the students they serve.
Remember:
SARA reconciles different interests

- Institutions’ goals
- Regulators’ concerns
- Others
  - Accreditors
  - Regional compacts
  - National Commission
  - US Department of Education

"Past-the-Easy-Stuff" challenges

- Reconciling SARA’s physical presence provisions with changing institutional practices – a never-ending issue
  - Experiential learning and physical presence
    - Why deal with experiential education at all?
      - Beneficial for students
      - Many states regulate it
      - Required for some degree programs (allied health, etc.)
    - Programs intended to lead to licensure

- Complaint resolution (SARA requirements vs actual state practice)
- USED’s 12/2016 rules and their intent regarding their definition of “state authorization reciprocity agreement”
- Yes, SECRRA is indeed going away! (June 30, 2017)
- Communications
- California, Florida and Massachusetts
- Some continued objections to SARA’s allowing for-profit institutions to participate
What’s Ahead for SARA?

• Add additional states and institutions
• Enrollment reporting and publication:
  – SARA institutions reported their out-of-state enrollments in May, 2016; results published in September;
  – Spring 2017 reporting set for May 22-June 14
• Under consideration
  – Student-focused information and assistance
  – Voluntary database of distance ed programs offered by SARA institutions

Now That We’re Past the “Easy” Stuff…

• Continue to add states and institutions
• Implications and implementation of IRS 501 (c)(3) status for NC-SARA
  – Establish independent budgeting, accounting, auditing, IT systems, employee benefits plans
  – Establish appropriate staffing levels
• Responding to “down-in-the-weeds” questions and policy issues
  – Physical presence
  – Experiential learning
  – Etc., etc., etc.

Additional Resources

• SARA
  www.nc-sara.org
• State Authorization
  http://wcet.wiche.edu/initiatives/state-authorization-network
• State contacts
  http://sheeo.org/projects/state-authorization-postsecondary-education
Questions?

As always, feel free to contact info@nc-sara.org with any additional questions or comments.