



# SARA

State Authorization  
Reciprocity Agreement for  
Distance Education

We're Way Past the  
"Easy Stuff" -- The  
Continuing Evolution of SARA

NASASPS April 5, 2017




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## Presenters:



**Marshall A. Hill**  
Executive Director, NC-SARA




**Mary Larson**  
Director  
Student Access Programs  
and Services, SREB




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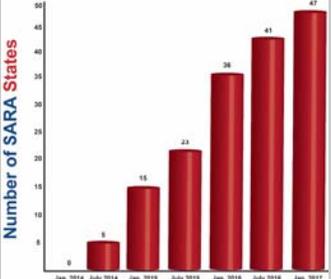
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## SARA Member States

Date	Number of SARA States
Jan 2014	6
July 2014	15
Jan 2015	23
July 2015	36
Jan 2016	41
July 2016	47

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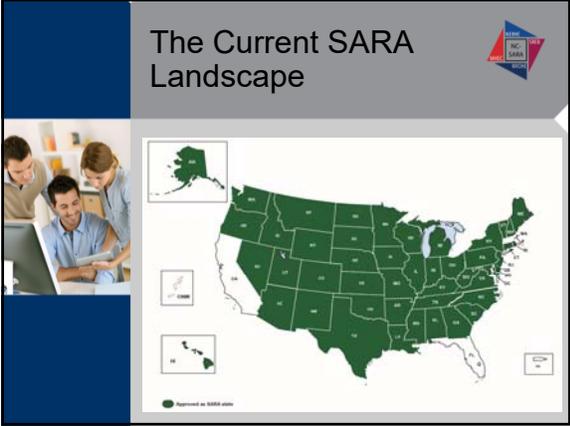
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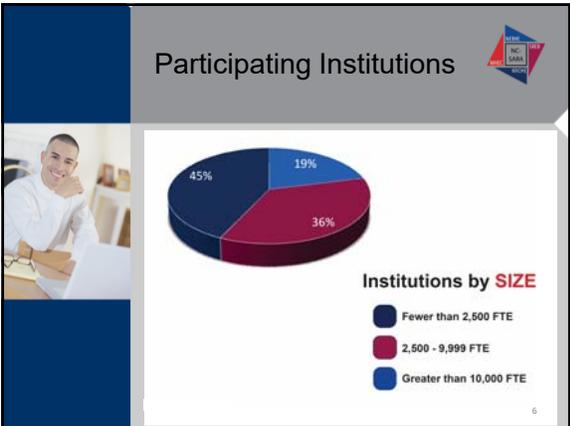
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## Participating Institutions

SECTOR	Percentage
Public	73%
Private/Non-Profit	24%
Independent/ For-Profit	3%
Tribal	0%

As of January 18, 2017

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## 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

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## 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.

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**Remember:  
SARA reconciles  
different interests**




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

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**“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

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**“Past-the-Easy-Stuff”  
challenges**




- 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, SECRRRA is indeed going away! (June 30, 2017)
- Communications
- California, Florida and Massachusetts
- Some continued objections to SARA's allowing for-profit institutions to participate

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## 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

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## 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.

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## Additional Resources




- SARA  
[www.nc-sara.org](http://www.nc-sara.org)
- State Authorization  
<http://wcet.wiche.edu/initiatives/state-authorization-network>
- State contacts  
<http://sheeo.org/projects/state-authorization-postsecondary-education>

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# Questions?

As always, feel free to contact [info@nc-sara.org](mailto:info@nc-sara.org) with any additional questions or comments

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