Accreditors’ 21st Century Distance Education Guidelines

2021 NASASPS Virtual Conference
October 13, 2021

Lori Williams, PhD
President & CEO
NC-SARA
Transition from Biannual to Annual Cycle for SARA Policy Review and Revision: May 2021 - May 2022

June - August 1, 2021

Comment period for 21st Century Guidelines to move toward October 2021 board meeting vote

AND

Suggestion period for new policy modification proposals to move toward May 2022 board meeting vote

August - October 2021

Activities for 21st Century Guidelines to move toward October board meeting vote

Initial discussions about new policy modification proposals to move toward May 2022 board meeting vote

November 2021 - May 2022

Activities for new policy modification proposals to move toward May 2022 board meeting vote

May 2022: Launch annual policy review and revision cycle, for policy modifications leading to May 2023 board meeting vote
Constituents and Process

Variety of Constituents Submit Feedback on or Proposals for SARA Policy:

- Accreditors
- Compacts
- Consumer Advocate Groups
- Higher Education Organizations
- Institutions
- Public
- Regional Steering Committees
- State Attorneys General
- State Portal Entities

All letters / feedback documents are shared directly with NC-SARA Board in preparation for their meetings.

Board Process leading to October Board Meeting:

- Executive Committee Discussion (2 meetings in August)
  - Pre-Board Policy Meeting (September 9, 2021)
    - Board preparation for October Board Meeting
Upcoming Board Meeting
October 28-29, 2021

Three Tabled Items from Board Meetings:

1) Branch Campuses
2) Sections 8.2 / 8.3
3) 21st Century Guidelines
Background on Accreditors’ 21st Century Guidelines

• Current Inclusion of C-RAC 2011 Interregional Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education in SARA Policy

• NCHEMS work with Accreditors on 21st Century Distance Education Guidelines

• C-RAC 2011 Guidelines Retired – March 2021

• 21st Century Distance Education Guidelines in use by:
  • The Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU)
  • The New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE)
  • The Higher Learning Commission (HLC)
  • Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC)
Tabled Items from Board Meetings: Accreditors’ 21st Century Guidelines

Feedback was received from:

- Institutions
- States / RSCs / Compacts
- Outside organizations: UPCEA/WCET/SAN, NASASPS
- Student Consumer Advocate Groups (5)

Categories of Feedback:

- Need for 21st Century Guidelines
- Guidelines themselves
- Implementation
- Process of Development and Next Steps
Accreditor Guidelines vs. Standards

• Standards
  • adopted by accreditors
  • required of institutions to demonstrate compliance adherence

• Guidelines
  • adopted by accreditors
  • optional for use by institutions & accreditation review teams
What do the Accreditor Guidelines Have to Do with NC-SARA?

• Potential Replacement for 2011 C-RAC Guidelines in SARA Policy
  • 2011 C-RAC Guidelines retired in early spring 2021
  • Several accreditors have adopted use of new 21st Century Guidelines

• Next Steps:
  • Executive Committee of Board recommended tabling this vote in October; NC-SARA Board Chair Lubbers is appointment a Working Group
  • Board member discussion took place at the September 9th Pre-Board Policy Meeting
  • Further discussion during the Executive Committee report portion (not the public part) of the October Board Meeting

• 21st Century Guidelines Board-Appointed Working Group
  • Bring together accreditors and SPEs
  • Discuss respective roles in distance education quality assurance
  • Determine whether and how to include the new Guidelines in SARA Policy
May 2022 Board Meeting Timeline

October 2021 – April 2022

- **October:** Initial discussions / preliminary analysis
- **Late November:** NC-SARA shares proposals with compacts and states for feedback
- **Month of December:** Compacts and their RSCs come together to organize their collective feedback on proposals – feedback due first week of January
- **Early February:** Final proposals posted and circulated for editorial changes or implementation needs
- **Early March:** Board Executive Committee meeting(s)
- **Mid-March:** Pre-Board Policy Meeting
- **Early April:** Board receives all materials to prepare for early May meeting
May 2022 Board Meeting Topics

In addition to potential next steps on Sections 8.2/8.3 and 21st Century Guidelines, we anticipate the Board will engage in policy discussions and/or voting on the following issues:

- Board membership
- Arbitration
- Federal financial responsibility scores
- Professional licensure disclosures
- And possibly more …
SARA Participating Institutions Enrollments

DISTANCE EDUCATION ENROLLMENT NEARLY DOUBLES

93% ↑ Increase in distance education enrollments at SARA-participating institutions between Fall 2019 and Fall 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Enrollment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>3,016,944</td>
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<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>5,825,723</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## SARA Participating Institutions Enrollments by Sector

### Public Institutions Responsible for Most Distance Education Enrollments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enrollment</th>
<th>Public</th>
<th>Tribal</th>
<th>Private Non-Profit</th>
<th>Private For-Profit</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>3,873,286</td>
<td>1,034</td>
<td>1,362,700</td>
<td>588,703</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>1,589,719</td>
<td>499</td>
<td>924,463</td>
<td>502,263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year Over Year Increase</strong></td>
<td><strong>144%</strong></td>
<td><strong>107%</strong></td>
<td><strong>47%</strong></td>
<td><strong>17%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Emergency Remote Learning vs. Quality Distance Education
SARA Participating Institutions Enrollments by Sector

INSTITUTIONS REPORT DISTANCE EDUCATION LIKELY TO CONTINUE POST-PANDEMIC

According to a voluntary survey of SARA-participating institutions*

- **85%** Moved courses to emergency remote learning in Fall 2020 because of the pandemic
- **59%** Plan to continue some or all of their emergency remote learning offerings via distance education after the pandemic

*The voluntary survey was delivered to all 2,201 SARA-participating institutions at the time of Fall 2020 data collection and had a response rate of 32%.*
Questions and Discussion
Thank You!

For questions please email:
info@nc-sara.org

NC-SARA Website:
www.nc-sara.org