

What's New with SARA? Update on the National State Reciprocity Agreement

January 23, 2014

- The webcast will begin at the top of the hour.
- There is no audio being broadcast at this time.
- If you need assistance, contact Blackboard Collaborate: 866-388-8674.
- An archive of this webcast will be available on the WCET website next week.





WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies

**What's New with SARA (the State
Authorization Reciprocity
Agreement)? Update on the National
State Reciprocity Agreement
January 23, 2014**

What's New with SARA? Update on the National State Reciprocity Agreement

- Welcome.
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 - Call 866-388-8674
- Use the chat box for questions.
- Archive, PowerPoint, and Resources available next week.



Megan Raymond,
Manager Events and Programs,
WCET



What's New with SARA? Update on the National State Reciprocity Agreement

- **Moderator**



- **Russell Poulin**, Interim Co-Executive Director and Deputy Director, Research and Analysis
- WCET

WCET

WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies

accelerates the adoption of effective practices
and policies, advancing excellence in
technology-enhanced teaching and learning in
higher education.

What's New with SARA? Update on the National State Reciprocity Agreement

- **Rhonda Epper**

- Director,
- WICHE-SARA



- **Marshall Hill**

- Executive Director,
- National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA)



Questions from the Audience

- If you have a question during the presentation, please add your questions to the chat box. We will monitor the chat box and have time for Q&A at the end.



Acknowledgement

Funding for national and regional implementation of SARA provided by
Lumina Foundation.



What's the Problem?

- States and territories regulate higher education within their borders, with varying requirements for out-of-state institutions that want to do business in the state.
- Cross-state online education offered by colleges and universities is expanding dramatically.
- At present there is no alternative to each institution separately pursuing any needed approvals (state authorization) in each state and territory where it enrolls students.
- Consequently, thousands of institutions are required to contact and work through as many as 54 states and territories, and, sometimes, with multiple regulatory agencies in those states.
- That process is inefficient, costly, and not effective in supporting access to high quality distance education throughout the country.

Goals

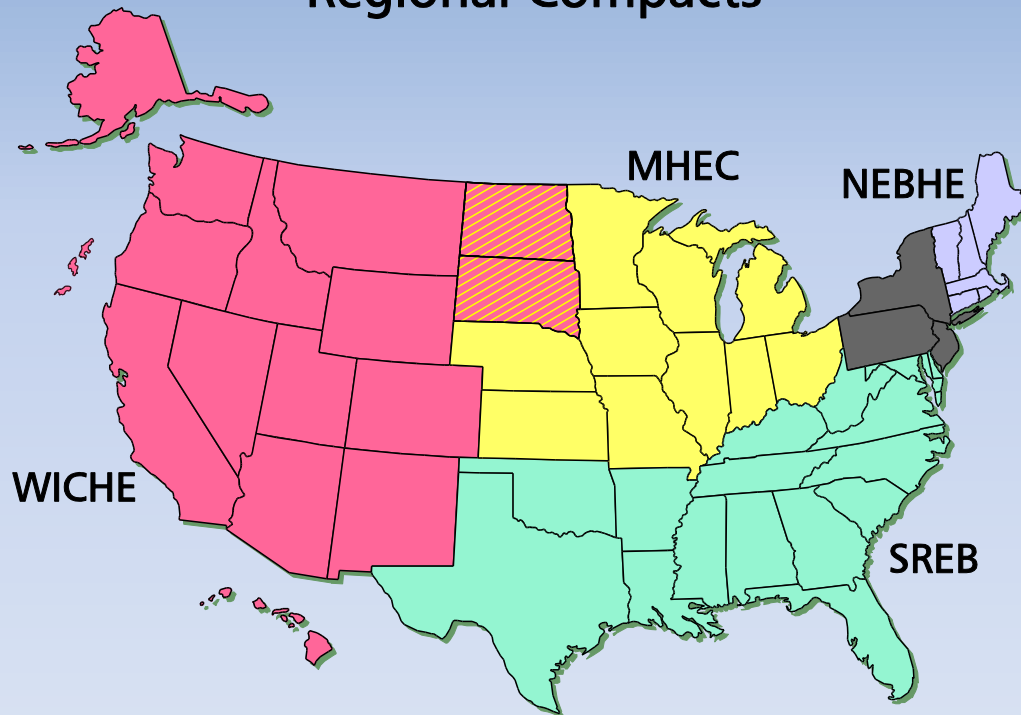
SARA establishes a **state-level reciprocity process** that will support the nation in its efforts to increase the educational attainment of its people by making state authorization:

- **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.

The Solution

A nation-wide system of reciprocity administered by the four existing regional compacts

Regional Compacts



National Council for SARA (NC-SARA)

- Purposes – coordination, appeals, financing, data.
- 21 members – regional compact presidents, accreditors, regulators, state government, SHEEO, various higher education sectors.
- First meeting November 1, 2013.
 - Consideration of by-laws.
 - Financial overview for SARA.
 - Establish fees for institutional participation in SARA.
 - \$2,000/year for institutions with fewer than 2,500 FTE students
 - \$4,000/year for institutions between 2,500-9,999 FTE students
 - \$6,000/year for institutions with 10,000 or more FTE students
 - Review and endorse regional SARA documents.
 - Regional status reports.

Essential principles of the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA)

- **Voluntary** for states and institutions.
- Acknowledges the **traditional roles within higher education's "accountability triad"**: federal government, states, and accrediting bodies recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.
- Lays out a **framework for state-level reciprocity**, including a governance structure, implementation by the four regional higher education compacts (MHEC, NEBHE, SREB, WICHE), a National Council for SARA to ensure comprehensive national coverage, and a financial plan to support operations.
- **Requires states to approve their in-state institutions** for SARA participation (based upon institutional accreditation and financial stability) and resolve student complaints.
- SARA states agree to impose **no additional (non-SARA) requirements** on institutions from other SARA states.

Essential Principles of SARA

- Open to degree-granting postsecondary institutions from all sectors: public colleges and universities; independent institutions, both non-profit and for-profit.
- Sets forth a reasonable, uniform set of triggers of “physical presence”.
- Preserves state approval and oversight of on-the-ground campuses.
- Shifts principal oversight responsibilities from the state in which the distance education is being received to the “home state” of the institution offering the instruction. (Host state can also work to resolve problems.)
- Initial funding from Lumina Foundation, eventual reliance on institutional fees paid to the National Council for SARA.

The SARA Process

Institutions seek approval from their home SARA-member state. The home state SARA agency then works with those institutions in regard to the export of on-line education across state lines to students in SARA host states.

Reduced Costs:

- Institution pays one fee per year to NC-SARA.
- Institution pays one or no fee to their home state SARA agency.
- Regulators switch from regulating imports to responding to problems caused by exports.
- Consistent criteria for SARA participation.
- Fewer students get turned away.
- Consistent (and eventually centralized) data collection and sharing.
- Consistent definition and clear path of complaint resolution.
- More consistent compliance.

Requirements for State Membership

- Must be a member of one of the four interstate higher education regional compacts that administer SARA.
(or affiliate with a compact for purposes of SARA)
- Must have the legal authority under state law to enter an interstate agreement on behalf of the state.
- Accept institutional accreditation by an federally recognized accrediting body as sufficient evidence of academic quality for approving institutions under SARA.
- Consider applications from degree-granting institutions of all sectors.
- For private institutions, accept an institutional federal financial responsibility rating of 1.5 as sufficient financial stability for SARA participation.

Requirements for State Membership

- Have a clearly articulated and comprehensive state process for consumer protection in regard to SARA activities (all sectors).
- Designate a “portal agency” to coordinate SARA matters and serve as principal point of contact for complaints.
- Will not impose any requirement, standard, or fee on an institution from another state operating under SARA.
 - (other than those set forth under SARA)
- Require institutions to abide by the Interregional Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education (C-RAC Guidelines).
- Agree to document all formal complaints received under SARA, actions taken, and resolutions.
- Have clear policies for addressing catastrophic events affecting the institutions for which it is responsible.

State Application Process

Submit to Regional Compact SARA Office:

- ✓ Copy of the statutory or other legal authority for the state to enter into an interstate reciprocity agreement.
- ✓ Copy of the complaint investigation and resolution process to handle complaints for all accredited degree-granting postsecondary institutions in your state.
 - ✓ *(Only for institutional activity under SARA)*
- ✓ Designate the “portal agency” for SARA.
- ✓ Signature of individual with authority to commit the state to the SARA interstate agreement.

Requirements for Institutional Participation

- Principal campus or central administrative unit is domiciled in a state that has joined SARA.
- U.S. degree-granting institution, accredited by a federally recognized accrediting body.
- For non-public institutions, have a financial responsibility index score of 1.5 or above.
- Agree to abide by the Interregional Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education (C-RAC Guidelines).
- Agree to be responsible for actions of any third party providers.
- Notify state SARA entity of any negative changes to your accreditation status.

Requirements for Institutional Participation

- Provide the data necessary to monitor SARA activities.
- Work with state SARA entity to resolve any complaints arising from students in other SARA states.
- Notify in writing all students enrolled in a course/program that customarily leads to professional licensure, whether or not the course/program meets requirements for licensure in the state where the student resides (or notify student if the institution is unable to determine).
- Pay any state fees assessed by your home state for administering SARA.

Institutional Application Process

Submit to your State SARA Agency:

- ✓ SARA Institutional Application.
- ✓ Signature from CEO or Chief Academic Officer – that certifies the institution meets all requirements.

When approved by State SARA Agency:

- ✓ Pay the annual fee to NC-SARA.

Latest News

- How many states are seriously considering SARA?
- Data, consumer protection, catastrophic events
- Work plan moving forward
 - Meetings
 - FAQs

Learn More About SARA

- NC-SARA website: www.nc-sara.org
- Regional Education Compacts:
 - MHEC – www.mhec.org
 - NEBHE – www.nebhe.org
 - SREB – www.sreb.org
 - WICHE – www.wiche.edu

Learn More About SARA

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Questions from the Audience

- Please add your questions to the chat box. If we do not get to all of them we will have the speakers provide written responses.



Thank you to the Presenters

- **Rhonda Epper**

- Director,
- WICHE-SARA



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WCET State Authorization Network

Expecting each institution to navigate authorization regulations in every state is highly inefficient. Working cooperatively, institutions can share the burden.

New program year begins April 1, 2014

<http://wcet.wiche.edu/advance/state-authorization-network>

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 - Listservs.
 - Free webcasts.
 - Exclusive member only resources.
- Attend WCET's 26th Annual Meeting in Portland, OR, November 19-21. Call for proposals will be announced soon.

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Join us for the Next Webcast

- **Bringing a Campus Experience to Online Students**

- William Preston Davis

- Director of Instructional Services,
- Northern Virginia Community College

- February 13, 2014

<http://wcet.wiche.edu/connect/campus-experience-to-online-students>

Additional Information and Resources

- Access to the resources discussed during this webcast, including the archive, will be available next week.
 - <http://wcet.wiche.edu/connect/webcasts>



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