

# National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements

*A voluntary, regional approach to state oversight of distance education*

## **MINUTES — NC-SARA Board Meeting**

November 1, 2013

EducationCounsel • 101 Constitution Avenue, NW, Suite 900 • Washington, D.C. 20001

### **NOTICE OF MEETING**

Notice of the time and place of the first meeting of the NC-SARA board was given to Board members, regional directors, Lumina Foundation, EducationCounsel, LLC, and other interested parties. An agenda is maintained in the NC-SARA offices at 3005 Center Green Drive, Suite 130, Boulder, CO 80301 and online at [www.nc-sara.org](http://www.nc-sara.org)

### **CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Chair Paul Lingenfelter called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

#### **Board Members present:**

Barbara Ballard  
Helena Stangle Bertram  
Christopher Bustamante  
Crazy deGolian  
Kathryn Dodge  
Larry Isaak  
Arthur Kirk, Jr.  
David Longanecker  
Teresa Lubbers  
M. Peter McPherson  
Patricia O'Brien  
Pam Quinn  
Paul Shiffman  
Dave Spence  
Michael Thomas  
Leroy Wade  
Belle Wheelan

#### **Board Members absent:**

Dianne Harrison  
Terry Hartle  
Eugene Ross

#### **Council Staff present:**

Marshall A. Hill  
Michelle Perez-Robles

#### **Regional Compact SARA Directors present:**

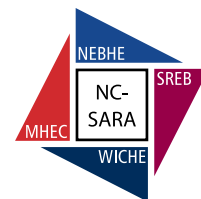
Rhonda Epper (WICHE)  
Mary Larson (SREB)  
Jennifer Parks (MHEC)

#### **WICHE Staff present:**

Jere Mock

#### **EducationCounsel Staff present:**

Terri Taylor  
Art Coleman



## **ACTION ITEM I WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Chair Paul Lingenfelter welcomed all present and thanked the individuals and organizations that have invested their time, knowledge and efforts to resolving the challenging issues we are addressing. Board members introduced themselves and stated their reasons for participating in SARA.

Chair Lingenfelter acknowledged the leadership and contributions of Bruce Chaloux to the development of SARA. Bruce was a member of the Presidents' Forum/Council of State Governments SARA drafting team, assisted in the SARA work of the regional compacts, and through his leadership of the Sloan Consortium supported the work of the National Commission on Regulation of Postsecondary Distance Education. He was to have been a member of NC-SARA. Chair Lingenfelter asked for a moment of silence in honor of Bruce, who recently passed away.

Chair Lingenfelter provided a brief description of the principles of SARA and acknowledged that the "authority" of NC-SARA arises from the willingness of all concerned to work together to develop an effective and efficient nationwide system to deal with the authorization of postsecondary distance education delivered across state lines. He stated that collaboration and consensus are essential to making this approach work.

## **ACTION ITEM II CONFIRMATION OF PAUL LINGENFELTER AS CHAIR**

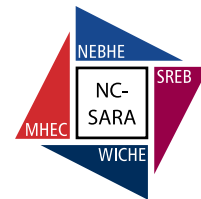
M. Peter McPherson moved to confirm the appointment of Paul Lingenfelter as Chair of NC-SARA for a term extending to January 1, 2016. David Longanecker seconded the motion. Lingenfelter left the room during the discussion and vote. The motion was approved with all members present voting "yes."

## **ACTION ITEM III CONFIRMATION OF MARSHALL A. HILL AS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Larry Isaak moved to confirm the appointment of Marshall Hill as Executive Director of NC-SARA. Belle Wheelan seconded the motion. Hill left the room during the discussion and vote. The motion was approved with all members present voting "yes."

## **ACTION ITEM IV SARA: BACKGROUND, OVERVIEW AND STATUS REPORT**

Marshall Hill addressed this agenda item. He reported that there is a great deal of institutional interest in SARA, that there remains a fair amount of misunderstanding of the details of the initiative, and that there has been almost no push back on the proposed fees that institutions will pay to join SARA. He is asked frequently about when states and institutions can join SARA, and he's frequently asked how many states he expects will become members and how soon they will join. He answers those questions by saying that his hope is that 20-25 states will join by the end of 2014 and his expectation is that 40-45 will be SARA states by 2016. He reported that states will need assistance with the SARA process and that a conversation has been started with EducationCounsel and others about how best to provide that assistance.



He reported that the NC-SARA website should be up and running in one to two weeks and that it will contain a repository for foundational documents, information regarding SARA, and links to the regional compact websites. He called attention to two documents contained in the board members' meeting packets: the map summarizing the staff's estimates of state readiness to join SARA and an information sheet regarding SARA. He responded to Board members' questions about SARA processes and the website.

David Longanecker reported that WICHE will provide IT staff for software development to do data collection. Hill reported that there are currently at least two "policy holes" that require attention: data collection and the reporting and resolution of complaints. Hill reported that he has asked the regional compacts to provide the names of two people from their regions who could assist with policy development around these issues.

## **ACTION ITEM V**

### **APPROVAL OF SARA DOCUMENTS FROM THE FOUR REGIONAL COMPACTS**

Marshall Hill reported that he engaged Dr. Jim Mingle, former executive director of SHEEO, to review the SARA documents developed and approved by the four regional compacts. He asked Dr. Mingle to compare the documents for consistency among the four and for compliance with the recommendations of the final report of the national Commission on the Regulation of Postsecondary Distance Education. Hill requested that Mingle focus on governance issues and physical presence topics within the documents. Hill provided Mingle's analysis to the regional compacts, resulting in subsequent modifications of the documents by the regional compacts to achieve the necessary consistency on key points. Hill reported that while the four documents contain some variance, they are now uniform and consistent in regard to the substantive structures, expectations, requirements, and mechanisms of SARA as contained in the final report and recommendations of the national Commission.

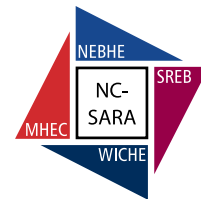
The board discussed the content of the documents at length, as well as the appropriateness of having NC-SARA "approve" them. Members commented that a nationwide system requires essentially consistent policies and standards across all regions and made the point that concerns about embracing consistency could be offset to some degree by reaffirming that participation in SARA is strictly voluntary for both states and institutions.

After considerable discussion, M. Peter McPherson moved to endorse the NC-SARA staff analysis and certify that the four regional SARA documents are consistent with one another in all substantive and material respects; are consistent with the principles and recommendations of the final report of the national Commission on the Regulation of Postsecondary Distance Education; and provide a basis for a nationwide reciprocity system for the approval of postsecondary distance education that crosses state lines. Kathryn Dodge seconded the motion. The motion passed with all members present voting "yes."

## **ACTION ITEM VI**

### **APPROVAL OF SARA STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES**

After extended discussion, M. Peter McPherson moved to approve "in principle" the proposed SARA Policies and Standards document with the understanding that the NC-SARA staff would work with the regional compacts to resolve any lingering concerns. David Longanecker seconded the motion. The motion passed with all members present voting "yes."



## **AGENDA ITEM VII**

### **DOCUMENTS FOR STATES TO USE IN APPLYING FOR MEMBERSHIP IN SARA**

After extended discussion, M. Peter McPherson moved to endorse “in principle” the proposed documents with the understanding that the NC-SARA staff would work with the regional compacts to resolve any lingering concerns. Kathryn Dodge seconded the motion. The motion passed with all members present voting “yes.”

## **AGENDA ITEM VIII**

### **DOCUMENTS FOR INSTITUTIONS TO USE IN APPLYING TO PARTICIPATE IN SARA**

Paul Shiffman moved to endorse “in principle” the proposed documents with the understanding that the NC-SARA staff would work with the regional compacts to resolve any lingering concerns. Belle Wheelan seconded the motion. The motion passed with all members present voting “yes.”

## **AGENDA ITEM IX**

### **APPROVAL OF INSTITUTIONAL FEES FOR PARTICIPATION IN SARA**

Marshall Hill made the following recommendations in regard to fees that will be charged institutions that participate in SARA:

1. Set institutional fees for participation in SARA at the following levels:
  - i. \$2,000 per year for institutions with fewer than 2,500 FTE students, as per IPEDS;
  - ii. \$4,000 per year for institutions with 2,500-9,999 FTE students; and
  - iii. \$6,000 per year for institutions with 10,000 or more FTE students.
2. Institutional fees shall be due within 30 days of the institution being notified by their state of their approval to operate under SARA. Renewals will be scheduled monthly.
3. Institutions joining SARA prior to September 1, 2014 will receive 18 months’ SARA membership for their initial fee payment. Renewals will be at the regular 12 month rate.
4. NC-SARA will reconsider these fee levels by January 1, 2016 and make whatever adjustments are advisable.

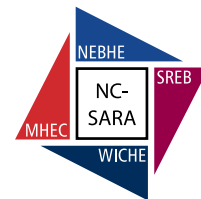
Proposed fees were approved with all members present voting “yes.”

## **AGENDA ITEM X**

### **BYLAWS FOR NC-SARA**

To initiate discussion, Michael Thomas made a motion to approve the bylaws; Arthur Kirk seconded. Discussion was wide ranging, with particular attention to the composition, responsibilities, and authority of the executive committee. Rather than propose motions regarding the entire set of bylaws, as discussion proceeded members made motions on various topics: the number and composition of the executive committee, the number of meetings of the executive committee, ways to limit the authority of the committee, etc.

After extended discussion, Paul Lingenfelter suggested that all previous motions be withdrawn and that the bylaws be tabled to allow for further staff work and consideration at the next NC-SARA meeting. Teresa Lubbers made a motion to that effect; Belle Wheelan seconded the motion. The motion passed with all members present voting “yes.”



Members selected slips of paper indicating whether their term of service would be two or three years; it was agreed that the staff would select for members not attending the meeting. The results of this drawing resulted in the initial terms for member ending as follows:

**Two-Year Term**

Barbara Ballard  
Cradly deGolian  
Dianne Harrison  
Terry Hartle  
Teresa Lubbers  
Eugene Ross  
Paul Shiffman  
Belle Wheelan

**Three-Year Term**

Helena Stangle Bertram  
Christopher Bustamante  
Kathryn Dodge  
Arthur Kirk Jr.  
Paul Lingenfelter  
M. Peter McPherson  
Patricia O'Brien  
Pam Quinn  
Leroy Wade

Regional compact presidents have continuing membership in NC-SARA.

**AGENDA ITEM XI**

**NC-SARA POLICY STATEMENT ON THE ROLE OF ACCREDITATION IN SUPPORT OF SARA**

Teresa Lubbers moved to approve the document (with the elimination of the first paragraph). Belle Wheelan seconded the motion. The motion passed with all members present voting "yes."

**AGENDA ITEM XII**

**ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FOR NC-SARA**

Item deferred.

**AGENDA ITEM XIII**

**TIMELINE MOVING FORWARD**

Paul Lingenfelter and Marshall Hill briefly discussed the timeline for future events in the work of SARA. When asked how members could best describe SARA, Marshall Hill suggested that SARA is "a consensus initiative of the higher education community, implemented by the four regional education compacts."

**AGENDA ITEM XIV**

**OTHER BUSINESS**

No discussion.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.