

# MINUTES OF THE NC-SARA BOARD MEETING

OCTOBER 30, 2019

THE CAPITAL HILTON  
WASHINGTON, DC

## NOTICE OF THE MEETING

Notice of the time and place of the NC-SARA Board Meeting was posted on the NC-SARA website and given to Board members, regional SARA directors, and other interested parties.

An agenda is maintained in the NC-SARA office at 3005 Center Green Drive, Suite 130, Boulder, CO 80301: and online at [www.nc-sara.org](http://www.nc-sara.org).

Welcome and introductions  
Paul E. Lingenfelter, Chair

### Board members in attendance:

Chris Bustamante  
Kathryn Dodge  
Susan Heegaard  
Teresa Lubbers  
Leah Matthews  
Demarée Michelau  
Pat O'Brien  
Stephen Pruitt  
Pam Quinn  
Ed Ray  
George Ross  
Kathleen C. Santora  
Paul Shiffman  
Peter Smith  
Michael Thomas  
Larry Tremblay  
Leroy Wade  
Belle Wheelan

**Board members in attendance by phone:**  
No one.

### Board members not in attendance:

Barbara Ballard  
Dianne Harrison

### NC-SARA staff present:

Marianne Boeke  
Mary A. Larson  
Lori Williams  
Shannon Walker  
Jeannie Yockey-Fine

### Regional compact staff present:

Sara Appel, MHEC  
Wanda Barker, SREB  
Emily Jacobson, MHEC  
Elisa Jaden, SREB  
Shelley Plutto, WICHE  
Christina Sedney, WICHE  
Rachael Stachowiak, NEBHE

### State portal entity staff present:

Angela Lee, District of Columbia  
Office the State Superintendent of  
Education

### Guests:

Michelle Michelbacher (note-taker)

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Meeting was called to order at 9:00 AM (Eastern Daylight Savings Time)

### **Agenda Item I (ACTION):** Approval of the minutes of the May 8-9, 2019 meeting.

Board member Demarée Michelau asked for a motion to approve the minutes with a couple of corrections as follows, "President Michelau informed the Board that the Western **Interstate Commission for Higher Education** compact is home to 16 **SARA** member states, with California being the only WICHE state (and the only state in the U.S.) that has not yet applied to join the initiative. State renewals remain consistent, with New Mexico and Wyoming being the most recent WICHE SARA members to be reapproved."

Motion to approve – Demarée Michelau

Seconded – Belle Whelan

Approval passed unanimously, with the revision suggested above.

### **Agenda Item II:** Update on NC-SARA progress

- a) Lori Williams, NC-SARA  
NC-SARA President and Chief Executive Officer (President/CEO) Lori Williams described the current state of NC-SARA by walking the Board through the Appendices in the Board meeting book, beginning with the listing of state fees that are optionally charged to institutions beyond NC-SARA fees in Appendix A. Appendix B shows charts and graphic images depicting the member states and participating institutions, and Appendix C shows the history of state actions to join SARA as members. A discussion about the longer-term possibility of California joining SARA took place also, with the emphasis on the need to demonstrate the benefit to students, with recommendations for testimonials from existing states and institutions.
- b) Susan Heegaard, Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC)  
President Susan Heegaard of MHEC informed the Board of some steering committee and staffing changes, as well as the work on strategic planning. She also shared that President/CEO Williams came for a visit and with her to Wisconsin to a dinner for institution leaders interested in SARA policy.
- c) Michael Thomas, New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE)  
President Michael Thomas invited the Board to join him in recognizing the work of Rachael Stachowiak, NEBHE's SARA Director. He also described the increase in the number of SARA participating institutions in his region, particularly in Connecticut, and the slowing of merger activity. President Thomas shared the support NEBHE has from its state stakeholders for continued and expanded training. He also described the advanced review of and consideration of changes to NC-SARA policies as inclusive, transparent, and positive for state portal entities.
- d) Stephen Pruitt, Southern Regional Education Board (SREB)  
President Stephen Pruitt of SREB shared with the Board his sincere thanks for the work of Wanda Barker (Director, Education Technology and Multistate Cooperative Programs) and Elisa Jaden (Coordinator, Student Access Programs and Services) and the reauthorization of six states. He also explained how he was able to ensure the continued

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membership of two states whose continued membership was in question. President Pruitt also described statewide SARA meetings in several states in his region that represents approximately 45% of SARA's participating institutions. He also explained that the state portal entities need more support, training and financial assistance and that SREB wants to support these needs to do the right thing for students.

- e) Demarée Michelau, Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) President Demarée Michelau shared with the Board that she and her staff, SARA Director, Christina Sedney and Shelly Pluto have been working to formalize the practices of W-SARA. She thanked the NC-SARA staff for assisting her before Christina took on the W-SARA Director role. President Michelau described her work with California to revise its internal policies and practices relative to student complaints and similar work in the U. S. affiliative Pacific Islands. President Michelau also reported that three WICHE region states held state SARA meetings to encourage institution compliance.

**Agenda Item III (ACTION):** Report and recommendations of the Executive Committee – Paul E. Lingenfelter, Chair

- a) **(ACTION):** NC-SARA FY 2019 audit report

Chair Lingenfelter invited Treasurer Wade to share an update on the financial status of the organization. Treasurer Wade reported that the financial health of the organization is strong as is reflected in the audit. A discussion took place about the desire to move to a new auditor after using the same firm for the past four years.

Motion to approve – Leah Matthews  
Seconded – Leroy Wade  
Motion passed unanimously.

- b) **(ACTION):** Modification of the NC-SARA Bylaws

Chair Lingenfelter briefly reviewed the proposed changes to the NC-SARA Bylaws to substitute the words "Board" or "NC-SARA" for the word "Council" in order to differentiate between the NC-SARA Board and the organization called NC-SARA.

Discussion ensued regarding the changes as proposed, and an additional recommendation was made to revise a sentence regarding the composition of the Finance Committee. A modified version of the language for Article 5, Section 3 is featured in the excerpt below in red (i.e. red and underlined):

Section 3: Finance Committee

The Finance Committee shall be comprised d of five up to six members, including the Treasurer, who shall chair the Committee."

Motion to approve changes (as noted and discussed)– Susan Heegaard  
Seconded – Larry Tremblay  
Motion passed unanimously.

- c) Nomination of Board members to a three-year term 2020 through 2022

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- Chris Bustamante
- Kathryn Dodge
- Paul Lingenfelter
- Pamela Quinn
- Paul Shiffman
- Peter Smith
- Larry Tremblay
- Leroy Wade

Board members asked that the minutes reflect that the period of time is a three-year term beginning immediately following the October, 2019 board meeting through the last board meeting in the fall of 2022. Chair Lingenfelter also noted that no vacancies will exist on the board in 2020 unless someone resigns to allow space for new members to join, given the situation with founding members being permitted to remain on the board for a third three-year term. He recommended that the board consider an orderly progression and add two or three new board members each year. It was also noted by Belle Whelan that there was a misprint regarding Paul Shiffman's current term end year, which said 2021 on page 5 of the board meeting book and should have read 2019.

Motion to approve – Executive Committee  
Nomination passed unanimously.

- d) Nominations for two-year terms to Executive Committee (returning members) – 2020 through 2021

- Chris Bustamante
- Patricia O'Brien
- Larry Tremblay

Chris Bustamante asked that as in the motion immediately preceding that it be made clear that the term is for two years, through 2021.

Motion to approve – Executive Committee  
Nomination passed unanimously.

- e) Nomination of Regional Presidents to serve on the Executive Committee

- Susan Heegaard
- Stephen Pruitt

Motion to approve – Executive Committee  
Nomination passed unanimously.

- f) Nominations of members of the Finance Committee

- Kathryn Dodge (re-election)
- Leah Matthews (re-election)
- George Ross (election)

Motion to approve – Executive Committee  
Nomination passed unanimously.

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g) Nominations of Officers

- Chair: Teresa Lubbers
- Vice Chair: Ed Ray
- Treasurer: Leroy Wade

Motion to approve – Executive Committee  
Nomination passed unanimously.

h) Nomination of individuals to be elected to three-year terms to the NC-SARA Board, 2020 through 2022

- John Cavanaugh
- Arthur “Art” L. Coleman
- Laurie Dodge
- Robert “Rob” E. Anderson

Motion to approve – Executive Committee  
Nomination passed unanimously.

Chair Lingenfelter thanked Kathleen Santora for her service on the NC-SARA Board as she steps off the Board following this Fall 2019 meeting.

Prior to turning to the Finance Committee Report, Chair Lingenfelter proposed that the Board consider a reserves policy change from 50% to 100% for NC-SARA. Discussion ensued and a decision was made to defer a decision until the May 2020 Board meeting after further research and discussion amongst the Finance Committee members.

**Agenda Item IV (ACTION): Finance Committee Report – Leroy Wade, Treasurer**

- a) Finance Committee report
- b) Review of institution fees for FY 2021 and FY2022

Treasurer Wade shared the Finance Committee proposal and rationale for neither increasing nor decreasing the current institutional fees (\$2,000 for institutions with full time enrollments (FTEs) under 2,500, \$4,000 for 2,500-9,999 FTEs, \$6,000 for FTEs above 10,000).

Motion to approve – Finance Committee  
Motion passed unanimously.

**Agenda Item V (ACTION): Modifications to the SARA Manual**

NC-SARA President/CEO Lori Williams guided Board members through the recommended revisions to be made to the *SARA Manual*. Discussions about the proposed modifications with the Executive Committee, the Regional Compact Presidents, the Regional Compact Directors, and the State Portal Entities resulted in the

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revisions presented to the Board. The key areas that were described in the overview are listed below.

Following the overview, Chair Lingenfelter suggested that the modifications be voted on as a package, and then opened the floor for questions and suggestions.

- a) Approve recommendation that states determine consequences for institutional failure to report enrollment data with an implementation date of January 1, 2021.

Chair Lingenfelter called for a motion to approve the language change.

Motion to approve – Larry Tremblay

Second – Demi Michelau

Approval passed unanimously.

- b) Approve affirming state responsibility to make timely confirmation of federal financial composite scores to determine an institution's eligibility to participate in SARA with an implementation date of January 1, 2021.

- c) Chair-elect Teresa Lubbers recommended the language be changed to "within 90 days of notification" instead of "within 90 days of publication." A modified version of the language for Section 2.5 c. is featured in the excerpt below in red (i.e. red and underlined):

"SARA States are to monitor the U.S. Department of Education's periodic publication of Composite Scores, review the scores assigned to the institutions they have approved to participate in SARA, determine whether those scores meet SARA requirements, and within 90 days of publication notification take appropriate action regarding the SARA participation of those institutions."

Chair Lingenfelter called for a motion to approve the language change.

Motion to approve – Larry Tremblay

Second – Demi Michelau

Approval passed unanimously.

Board members clarified that although the states have responsibility for determining an institution's eligibility to participate, NC-SARA staff will continue to assist states in obtaining information about changes to composite scores, sending messages when the Heightened Cash Monitoring reports are released quarterly from the U.S. Department of Education, for example. President/CEO Williams also agreed to work to develop training for states on this topic and Leah Matthews agreed to assist in this effort.

- d) Approve recommendation regarding an institution's eligibility to participate in SARA following a change in ownership

President/CEO Williams invited Jeannie Yockey-Fine to describe the need for the modification regarding an institutional change in ownership. Following discussion and a recommendation to clarify the role of accreditors in change of ownership, it was agreed to add the parenthetical phrase, after the word "agencies," "including the institution's accreditor," to the recommended *SARA Manual* language change. A modified version of the language for Section 3.4 is featured in the excerpt below in red (i.e. red and underlined):

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3.4 SARA eligibility following Change of ownership:

a. A change of ownership will be determined by the home state.

1. A SARA participating institution will remain under SARA until the required approvals are completed by all agencies, including the institution's accreditor.

Chair Lingenfelter called for a motion to approve the language change.

Motion to approve – Patricia O'Brien

Approval passed unanimously.

- e) Approve recommendation regarding aligning new Federal Regulation language with the *SARA Manual* language on the use of the word "located" versus "resides."

Larry Tremblay asked for further clarification about the language change as it pertains to professional licensure disclosure. Mary Larson and Jeannie Yockey-Fine elaborated on the federal rules that required the change.

- f) Approve adding statement to clarify the relationship between *the Unified State Authorization Unified Agreement*, "*Unified Agreement*" and the *SARA Manual* to confirm the *SARA Manual* as current policy document.

Susan Heegaard asked for clarification about the process for making additional modifications to the *SARA Manual*, especially given any discrepancies between the *Manual* and the *Unified Agreement*. President/CEO Williams explained that any proposed changes are to be brought to the Board for review, discussion, and a vote on adoption.

Chair Lingenfelter then asked for a motion to approve the package of changes to the *SARA Manual*.

Motion to approve – Larry Tremblay

Second – Kathryn Dodge

Approval passed unanimously.

Additional approved edits will be made to the *SARA Manual* and to the Bylaws and the latest versions will be uploaded to the NC-SARA website.

**Agenda Item VI (ACTION):** Information items – Lori Williams

- a) Update on President's 30-6-90 Day Plan

NC-SARA President/CEO Williams shared that all items on her 90-day plan have been accomplished including getting to know the Board members, meeting with the Executive and Finance Committees, and the Regional Compact Presidents and Directors. She reported having had attended multiple meetings during her "listening tour" including state portal entity and regional compact steering committee meetings. She also described the RFP process for selecting consultants to assist in communications, public relations, and strategic planning, in alignment with a Strategic Vision document she wrote and shared during a Board retreat on October 29, 2019.

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- b) Enrollment and experiential learning placement reporting  
NC-SARA President/CEO Williams asked staff member Marianne Boeke to brief the Board about the annual Enrollment and Out-of-State Learning Placements (OOSLP) data SARA-participating institutions submit to NC-SARA.
- c) Federal negotiated rulemaking  
NC-SARA President/CEO Williams asked staff member Jeannie Yockey-Fine to share an update on the status of the federal negotiated rulemaking. President/CEO Williams and new NC-SARA Board Chair Teresa Lubbers met with the U.S. Department of Education senior staff on Monday, October 28, 2019 and were assured that NC-SARA comments were heard and were considered in the soon-to-be-released final rules.
- d) Update on website, student and institution support and searchable catalog of academic programs offered by SARA participating institutions NC-SARA  
President/CEO Williams asked staff member Mary Larson to share an update on the status of the development of these web-based activities and projects.
- e) Staffing and staff activities  
NC-SARA President/CEO Williams invited Board members to review the lengthy list of meetings and conferences attended by staff over the last six months. (See Board book for detailed chart of activities.)

Agenda Item VII: Executive Session

Agenda Item VIII: Questions, comments, reflections from Board members

Adjourn