



National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements

A voluntary, regional approach to state oversight of distance education

MINUTES — NC-SARA Board Meeting

May 14, 2014

Hyatt Regency O'Hare • 9300 Bryn Mawr Avenue • Rosemont, IL 60018

NOTICE OF MEETING

Notice of the time and place of the NC-SARA board meeting was given to board members, regional directors, Lumina Foundation, Gates Foundation, 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

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Paul Lingenfelter called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m.

Board Members present:

Barbara Ballard
Cradly deGolian
Kathryn Dodge*
Dianne Harrison
Terry Hartle
Arthur Kirk, Jr.
David Longanecker
Teresa Lubbers
M. Peter McPherson
Patricia O'Brien*
Pam Quinn
George Ross
Helena Stangle
Michael Thomas
Leroy Wade
Belle Wheelan

Board Members absent:

Christopher Bustamante
Larry Isaak
Paul Shiffman
David Spence

Council staff present:

Marshall Hill
Lisa Greco
Michelle Perez-Robles

Regional Compact SARA Directors present:

Sandra Doran, NEBHE-SARA*
Rhonda Epper, WICHE-SARA
Mary Larson, SREB-SARA
Jennifer Parks, MHEC-SARA

Lumina Foundation staff present:

Christine Marson

Gates Foundation staff present:

Travis Reindl

EducationCounsel, LLC staff present:

Arthur Coleman
Teresa Taylor

Guest attendee:

Steven Clark, Liberty University



ACTION ITEM I

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 1, 2013, NC-SARA BOARD MEETING

Terry Hartle moved to approve the minutes of the November 1, 2013, NC-SARA board meeting; Belle Wheelan seconded the motion. The motion passed with all members present voting “yes.”

ACTION ITEM II

UPDATE ON PROGRESS OF THE SARA INITIATIVE

Marshall Hill, SARA executive director, updated the board on the progress of SARA. He provided additional details on information summarized on the “State Actions Regarding SARA” chart. He also reported on the work of the negotiated rule making panel at the U.S. Department of Education; two draft rules affecting state authorization of postsecondary distance education are under consideration. Hill is participating in that process.

Jennifer Parks, M-SARA director, updated the board on the progress of M-SARA, noting that Indiana and North Dakota have joined. Parks estimates that nine MHEC states will join SARA by the end of 2014. A detailed report was provided with the agenda materials and is on file with the NC-SARA office.

David Longanecker, WICHE president, and Rhonda Epper, W-SARA director, updated the board on the progress of the W-SARA region, noting that Alaska, Washington, Idaho, Nevada, and Colorado have joined SARA. A detailed report was provided with the agenda materials and is on file with the NC-SARA office.

Michael Thomas, NEBHE president and CEO, updated the board on progress of the N-SARA region. New Hampshire, Vermont, Connecticut, and Rhode Island have begun the process of joining SARA. A detailed report was provided with the agenda materials and is on file with the NC-SARA office.

Mary Larson, S-SARA director, updated the board on progress in the S-SARA region. Several states will be moving from SECRRA (SREB’s regional reciprocity agreement) to SARA in the coming months. A detailed report was provided with the agenda materials and is on file with the NC-SARA office.

Board members requested that SARA directors begin identifying themes and patterns for states that appear reluctant to join SARA.

The reports were accepted by general consent.

ACTION ITEM III

FINANCE REPORT

David Longanecker summarized the financial status of SARA. A detailed report including tables was provided with the agenda materials and is on file with the NC-SARA office. Chair Lingenfelter asked for a motion to approve the financial reports, with the provision that moving forward, quarterly financial reports will be sent to board members. Terry Hartle made that motion; Dianne Harrison seconded. The motion was approved with all members present voting “yes.”



ACTION ITEM IV CONSIDERATION OF LEGAL STATUS FOR NC-SARA

Hill provided a summary of the detailed analysis and recommendations that EducationCounsel, LLC prepared for NC-SARA regarding legal status of the organization. A detailed report was provided in the agenda materials and is on file with the NC-SARA office. M. Peter McPherson moved to provisionally approve this recommendation subject to final review of the executive committee after additional legal consultation regarding the definition of lobbying. Hartle seconded the motion. The motion was approved with all members present voting “yes.”

ACTION ITEM V ADOPTION OF BYLAWS FOR NC-SARA

Hill summarized the current status of NC-SARA bylaws. A detailed report was provided with the agenda materials and is on file with the NC-SARA office. Hartle moved to approve the proposed bylaws with the addition of specific beginning and ending times for board members; Wheelan seconded the motion. Discussion resulted in modifications to Article 1, Section 2: the word “oversight” was removed, and language was added to clarify the purposes of the organization, particularly in regard to promoting and certifying consistency among the four regional SARA agreements and providing a venue to discuss and mediate disputes. Harrison moved to approve the bylaws inclusive of modification; Hartle seconded the motion. The motion was approved with all members present voting “yes.”

ACTION ITEM VI ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Chair Lingenfelter provided an overview of his actions in appointing the nominating committee, which consisted of Crady deGolian, Arthur Kirk, Helena Stangle, Kathryn Dodge, Paul Lingenfelter and David Longanecker. The committee nominated M. Peter McPherson as Vice-Chair; Larry Isaak as Treasurer; and the following members to the executive committee: Michael Thomas, Belle Wheelan, Leroy Wade, and Paul Shiffman. Arthur Kirk, Jr., moved to elect as officers and members of the executive committee the council members nominated by the committee. Hartle seconded the motion. The motion was approved with all members present voting “yes.”

ACTION ITEM VII ADDITIONS AND MODIFICATIONS TO NC-SARA POLICES AND STANDARDS

Hill discussed two draft policies for possible adoption: data submission requirements for institutions participating in SARA, and complaint resolution reporting for states participating in SARA. He provided a list of the members of the group that he convened to make recommendations on those issues.

The board discussed data issues for SARA in detail, as well as policies for reporting complaints. Board members requested that a technical advisory panel consisting of people knowledgeable in specific areas be created to review implementation documents and procedures prior to their use. After extended discussion, but without adoption of a formal motion, the board expressed their general approval for the policies outlined in the agenda material, encouraged careful attention to limiting language designed to ensure accurate reporting, and stated that the technical advisory panels should include individuals currently active in institutional reporting roles. Chair Lingenfelter suggested that our work in this area should be careful and deliberate, avoid harm to institutions, and fit for our purposes, rather than expanded into other areas.



The board agreed that the staff should proceed under these general understandings and that the documentation developed to implement the reporting of data by SARA institutions and the reporting of complaints by state SARA agencies would be reviewed and approved by the board prior to use. Staff agreed to move forward under the general principles introduced with the goal of beginning the reporting process in late 2014 or early 2015. Staff agreed that if that timeline proved impractical, adjustments would be made, a “pilot” approach with institutional volunteers would be considered, etc. All agreed that these were important matters and must be handled with care.

WORK PLAN MOVING FORWARD

Hill provided information to the board regarding upcoming SARA presentations and welcomed invitations to speak at additional venues. He presented the board with a document that the NC-SARA staff has developed in conjunction with EducationCounsel, LLC that will serve as a resource to states as they consider joining SARA. The document will be available on the NC-SARA website. Hill told the board about the growing number of subscribers to the NC-SARA newsletter and informed them that SARA is also operating a blog, and the website provides direct links to the regional compacts.

EFFORTS OF THE BILL & MELINDA GATES FOUNDATION, THE PRESIDENT’S FORUM, AND THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS TO PROMOTE SARA

Hill introduced Travis Reindl, a representative of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Reindl summarized the Foundation’s interest in supporting SARA. He stated that its goals are to work closely with SARA to bring key stakeholders together, inform stakeholders and organizations about SARA, to provide consistent and effective messaging to stakeholders regarding SARA, and to work in collaboration with SARA, states, and organizations as a community around this issue. The Foundation will be providing financial support to the Presidents’ Forum and the Council of State Governments to aid that work. The Foundation is also likely to provide some direct financial support to NC-SARA and the four regional compacts to support SARA implementation.

Crady deGolian provided a summary of CSG’s support of SARA. CSG will provide additional opportunities to inform state government leaders about SARA and will work in conjunction with SARA staff in that regard. CSG’s goal is to help SARA spread to all 50 states.

QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, REFLECTIONS

No further questions, comments, or reflections.

Meeting adjourned at: 2:35 p.m.