



***SPRING 2021 BOARD MEETING  
WEDNESDAY, MAY 5, 2021  
VIRTUAL MEETING  
9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. Mountain Time***

**Summary of Major Actions and Discussion**

*(These are not official minutes of the NC-SARA Board.)*

Chair Teresa Lubbers called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

**SARA PROGRESS AND PROJECTS REPORT**

President Lori Williams and staff shared updates on the following areas: new staff, strategic plan progress, educational programming, communications, information technology including website content refresh, enrollment data reporting, cost savings study, consumer protection, the State Authorization Guide, the Professional Licensure Directory, the SARA Source (coming program catalog), and the July 2021 NC-SARA Institution Conference.

**REGIONAL COMPACTS REPORT**

Presidents Susan Heegaard, Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC); Michael Thomas, New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE); Stephen Pruitt, Southern Regional Education Board (SREB); and Demarée Michelau, Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) gave a brief introduction to the role of the compacts in the administration of SARA in their regions. After the introduction, each shared a SARA report.

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT**

The board of directors:

- Received an update on the March 18, 2021 policy review meeting.
- Received an update on board succession planning.
- Approved a new financial auditor.

## **FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT**

The board of directors:

- Received the FY21 third quarter financial report.
- Received an update on reserves investment from Colorado Financial Management.
- Approved the FY2022-23 budget.

## **GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS REPORT**

Catherine Guttman-McCabe of the Potomac Law Group, external counsel to NC-SARA, gave an update on the federal higher education landscape and its impact on NC-SARA, including consumer protection considerations.

## **UPDATE ON 21ST CENTURY DISTANCE EDUCATION GUIDELINES**

Sally Johnstone, President of the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, and Barbara Brittingham, retired president of the New England Commission on Higher Education shared an update on the NC-SARA commissioned NCHEMS research that led to the development of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Distance Education Guidelines. Board members involved in the project shared about their experience as well as about how the 2011 C-RAC Guidelines are now retired in the wake of the development of the new guidelines.

## **BRANCH CAMPUS WORKING GROUP REPORT**

Susan Heegaard, co-chair of the Branch Campus Working Group shared a brief overview of the report that the group delivered to the board ahead of the board meeting.

## **MODIFICATIONS TO THE *SARA POLICY MANUAL***

NC-SARA received proposals for and comments about SARA policy from many constituents, and shared all of them with the board for their consideration and review in advance of the meeting:

- Institutions
- State members through regional compacts: MHEC, NEBHE, SREB, and WICHE
- Public comments from The Institute for College Access and Success, New America, The Century Foundation, and National Consumer Law Center

Also, members of the board held a meeting in March to discuss policy proposals prior to the May 5th meeting.

The board of directors:

- Approved three policy change modifications:
  - Section 3.2(a)(8) modification to extend provisional status under certain circumstances.
  - Section 3.2(e) modification to extend provisional status specific to change of ownership, for ongoing investigation, or for an extension of an accreditation probationary period.
  - Section 3.2(g)(2) modification to align with recommended edits to Section 3.2(e).

- Approved seven modifications to clarify policy:
  - Section 2.2(b) modification to update the appeals language to reflect the implementation of the policy by the passed deadline.
  - Section 2.5(c) modification to update the language to related to the federal financial responsibility composite score (FRCS) pertaining to institutions and parent companies.
  - Section 2.5(d) change to update the appeals language to reflect the current implementation of the policy.
  - Section 2.6(c) change to update the appeals language to reflect the current implementation of the policy and to clarify that notifications of state appeals from compacts to NC-SARA are made within 5 business days.
  - Section 3.8 (c) policy language to align with the now implemented appeals process.
  - Section 5.10(b)(5) modification to remove the word “academic” to clarify that states do not need to differentiate between types of institutional staff.
  - Section 6.2 change to remove screen shots associated with the process of submitting institutional enrollment data.

After recognizing that the board had not formally voted to table two additional items for consideration at a later date, the board did so, following the meeting, via an electronic vote.

The board of directors:

- Tabled one policy modification to allow more time for review:
  - Removal of Section 8.3 to combine with Section 8.2 to ensure all policy modifications are treated the same.
- Tabled one policy modification to allow more time for public comment and review:
  - Section 4.7 modification to include and use the 21st Century Distance Education Guidelines.

**The next meeting of the NC-SARA Board will take place  
October 29, 2021 in Washington, DC.**