



National Council for
State Authorization
Reciprocity Agreements

MHEC • NEBHE • SREB • WICHE

**FALL 2021 BOARD MEETING
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2021
Hybrid Meeting, Washington, DC
8:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Eastern 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 8:00 a.m.

NC-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, data and research including annual data reporting, State Portal Entities' activities, consumer protection, the July 2021 NC-SARA Institution Conference, and the SARA Source (program catalog to be launched in early 2022).

REGIONAL COMPACTS' REPORTS

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 from their respective regions.

UNIFIED AGREEMENT REAFFIRMATION

Chair Teresa Lubbers read a [statement](#) of reaffirmation of the Unified Agreement which was unanimously approved by the board.

REGIONAL STEERING COMMITTEES

The four regional compacts' SARA steering committee chairs addressed the board: Betsy Talbot

(MHEC), Ed Klonoski (NEBHE), Angela Lee (SREB,) and Sam Loftin (WICHE). They shared their desire to work in partnership with the board and NC-SARA staff in building a new process for considering policy changes and to continue to engage the board directly at future board meetings.

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

The board of directors:

- Approved no change to institution fees for 2022-24.
- Received the FY2021 financial report.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

The board of directors:

- Approved the FY 2021 Financial Audit.
- Approved bylaws modifications.
- Elected Executive Committee members, Finance Committee members, new board members, and board officers.
- Tabled and discussed policy modifications including those concerning *SARA Policy Manual* sections 8.2 and 8.3, inclusion of accreditors' 21st Century Distance Education Guidelines, and branch campuses.

MODIFICATIONS TO THE *SARA POLICY MANUAL*

NC-SARA received proposals for and comments about SARA policy from many constituents, and shared all of the original documents with the board for consideration and review in advance of the meeting. Input was received from:

- Institutions
- State members through regional compacts and their regional steering committees: MHEC, NEBHE, SREB, and WICHE
- Public comments from The Institute for College Access and Success, New America, The Century Foundation, National Consumer Law Center, and Veterans Education Success; NASASPS; and UPCEA/WCET/SAN.
- Public comments from 25 State Attorneys General

(Members of the board held a meeting in September to discuss policy proposals prior to the October 29th meeting.)

During its meeting, the Board tabled and discussed policy modifications including those concerning *SARA Policy Manual* sections 8.2 and 8.3, inclusion of accreditors' 21st Century Distance Education Guidelines, and branch campuses. Here are the next steps coming out of the meeting regarding SARA policy:

- **Accreditors' 21st Century Guidelines for Distance Education:** The board established a working group to review and consider input from multiple stakeholders and to make recommendations to the NC-SARA Board in order to resolve issues associated with SARA policy regarding the retired 2011 C-RAC Interregional Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education and the accreditors' 21st Century Distance Education Guidelines.
- **Branch Campuses:** The board voted to table all recommendations from the branch campus working group in order to consider a new process for review of recommendations coming from working groups.
- **Sections 8.2 and 8.3:** The board tabled proposed policy modifications to sections 8.2 and 8.3 of the *SARA Policy Manual*. As the process for policy modifications are being planned and deliberated, to allow for an even more open and transparent process that accounts for the multiple stakeholders engaged in SARA work, the board will revisit these changes at a later date.

The next meeting of the NC-SARA Board will take place May 6, 2022 in Denver, CO.