

S-SARA Steering Committee Minutes
June 9, 2016
Atlanta, Georgia

Steering Committee Members Present

- Jessica Acton (TX), Program Director, Academic Quality, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
- Daniel Archer (OK), Assistant Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education
- Alana Boles (AR), Program Specialist, Academic Affairs, Arkansas Department of Higher Education
- Joseph DeFilippo (VA), Director of Academic Affairs and Planning, State Council of Higher Education for Virginia
- Menia Dykes (MS), Director of Accreditation, Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning
- Carl G. Camann (GA), Deputy Director, Georgia Nonpublic Postsecondary Education Commission (for Corinna Robinson)
- Robert Keown (GA), Executive Director, Georgia Virtual Technical Connection, Technical College System of Georgia
- Larry Tremblay (LA), Deputy Commissioner for Planning, Research and Academic Affairs, Louisiana Board of Regents
- Monica Wheatley (MD), Associate Director, Collegiate Affairs, Maryland Higher Education Commission
- Julie Woodruff (TN), Director of Postsecondary School Authorization and Lead Attorney, Tennessee Higher Education Commission
- Jeannie Yockey-Fine, Senior Advisor, State Regulatory Services, Cooley, LLP

Steering Committee Members Absent

- Greg Finch (AL), Executive Director, Alabama Commission on Higher Education
- Steve Kime, Former SREB Board Member
- Robert Reed (FL), Assistant Director of Distributed Learning, University of Central Florida
- Corinna Robinson (GA), Executive Director, Georgia Nonpublic Postsecondary Education Commission
- Mark Stotler (WV), Director of Academic Programming, West Virginia Higher Education Policy

SREB Staff and Consultants Present

- Wanda Barker, Director, Educational Technology Cooperative
- Kris Biesinger, Consultant, SARA
- Mary Larson, Director, Student Access Programs and Services
- Joan Lord, Vice President, Education Data, Policy Research and Programs
- Betsey Martin, Coordinator, Student Access Programs and Services
- Phil Moss, Consultant, Theadulthood.org

NC SARA Staff Present

- Marshall Hill, Executive Director, National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC SARA)

Invited Guests

- Theresa Antworth (FL), Vice President of Special Programs and External Relations, Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida
- Clay Barton (SC), Licensing Program Coordinator, Postsecondary Institution Licensing, South Carolina Commission on Higher Education
- Jillette Battle (TN), State Authorization Coordinator, Tennessee Board of Regents
- Susan Haberstroh (DE), Director, Policy and External Affairs, Delaware Department of Education
- Lane Goodwin (SC), Program Coordinator, South Carolina Commission on Higher Education
- Patricia Landis (PA), Division Chief, Pennsylvania Department of Education
- John Lane (SC), Director, Academic Affairs, South Carolina Commission on Higher Education
- Angela Lee (DC), Executive Director, District of Columbia Education Licensure Commission
- Laura Makransky (DE), Deputy Attorney General, Delaware Department of Justice, Civil Division Administrative Law and Education
- Elizabeth McDuffie (NC), Executive Director, North Carolina State Education Assistance Authority
- Pat Neri (GA), Exempt Institution Coordinator, Georgia Nonpublic Postsecondary Education Commission

S-SARA Steering Committee Minutes
June 9, 2016
Atlanta, Georgia

- Claire Norris (LA), Senior Policy Analyst, Louisiana Board of Regents
- Travis Powell (KY), General Counsel and Assistant Vice President, Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education
- Terrence Scarborough (NC), Assistant Director for Licensure, University of North Carolina, General Administration

Introductions and Welcome

Joan Lord facilitated introductions of all in attendance. She reviewed current SREB activity and then turned the meeting over to Mary Larson who reviewed meeting logistics and the packet of information that was provided. Mary reviewed the members of the Steering Committee and reminded everyone only members of the Steering Committee were eligible to vote. Mary introduced Larry Tremblay who spoke on the continued success of SARA and called the meeting to order at 10:21 a.m.

Meeting Procedures

Larry asked that when a committee member makes a motion or seconds a motion that the member should indicate his/her name and state to aid in documenting actions taken. Larry also spoke to the number of reviews each application receives from SREB staff, NC SARA staff and the members of the Steering Committee.

Adoption of Minutes from Prior Meetings

Minutes of the second Steering Committee meeting in October 2015 were circulated prior to the meeting and corrections gathered and implemented in the copy provided at the meeting. Robert Keown moved to accept. Alana Boles seconded. Minutes approved unanimously as amended.

Review of State Applications

Larry Tremblay asked each state representative, when reviewing the application, to confirm the effective participation dates for the press announcement and for institution application submission. He also invited the state representatives to talk about the process they implemented to prepare the state to submit the SARA application including whether or not legislation was required and whether or not there were any particular challenges that were encountered.

Delaware

Introduction of the Delaware Application – Susan Haberstroh and Laura Makransky

Delaware has been a member of the SREB since the mid-1980s and the Department of Education has had the authority to approve education entities. No legislation changed, but a team of 5 or 6 people worked to make sure that the state regulations aligned with SARA.

Discussion:

- The start date for SARA membership effective September 1, 2016.
- No interest from proprietary entities yet.
- There have been some state meetings for institutions and interest exists.
- Quite a few institutions incorporate in DE and they have to get approval from the DOE even if located elsewhere.
- SARA is focused on where the institution is recognized and approved by accreditors. Incorporation has not been the focus.
- Delaware has recently started regulating distance education from out of state.
- Delaware will have a \$250 application fee then payment of \$1,000 every 5 years.
- Many entities incorporate in the state of DE but if you want to confer a degree you have to be approved by DE DOE; claim domicile by incorporation.
- Provision in DE application that indicates that institutions of higher education that are members of the reciprocal agreement will abide by the SARA requirements set forth by DE (Page 40; 3.2.3).

Robert Keown moved to accept. Carl Camann seconded. **Delaware's application approved unanimously.** Effective operational date is September 1, 2016.

S-SARA Steering Committee Minutes
June 9, 2016
Atlanta, Georgia

District of Columbia

Introduction of the DC Application – Angela Lee

DC required statutory changes to regulate distance education. Work began a little over three years ago and hurdles were encountered in the legislative process. Any institution in DC will have to follow the C-RAC standards. A significant loss of revenue is anticipated due to the cost of becoming an affiliate with the SREB for SARA and from loss of fees associated with internships. In DC there exists a law that prohibits institutions from having certain words in its name. It was determined that the law still applies for non-SARA schools, but SARA institutions will not be impacted by the naming requirements. Congressionally chartered institutions have exemptions and for those institutions SARA fees will be the only fees.

Discussion:

- Most institutions are non-public – approximately 18-19 institutions.
- University of the DC is the only institution that does not fall under the Higher Education Licensure Commission because they operate as an instrumentality of the government.
- Intend to require letter of credit or bond from private institutions: cap is \$50,000.
- Congressional chartered institutions have exemptions, so they will be expected to enter into MOUs with the Higher Education Licensure Commission for purposes of SARA.
- It was an easy decision to affiliate with SREB: natural decision.
- DC fees will be \$3,000, \$6000, and \$9000 using same FTE as SARA.

Alana Boles moved to accept DC's application and Jeannie Yockey-Fine seconded the motion. **The District of Columbia's application approved unanimously.** Effective operational date is July 1, 2016.

North Carolina

Introduction of the North Carolina Application – Terrence Scarborough and Elizabeth McDuffie

Terrence thanked Mary Larson and the SREB for the support and help throughout the years indicating that the road to SARA has been a long and extremely challenging journey in North Carolina. He also thanked Marshall Hill, NC SARA staff, Russ Poulin and the WCET, and many people around the table for supporting NC in this work. North Carolina does not have a statewide governing board overall higher education. There are three higher education sectors (representing nearly 110 campuses) that had to come together to implement SARA. The UNC Board of Governors voted in January 2016 to become the SARA state with the State Higher Education Assistance Authority (SHEAA) as the portal entity. They will be looking for a SARA Director immediately. Effective dates are as follows: June 13 for field experiences, Oct. 1 for internal institutions. Fees will be equivalent to those of SARA.

Discussion:

- All three sectors indicated that there needed to be an advisory council consisting of 9 members, 3 from each sector, who can speak to concerns and interests from the institutions, and 3 ex officio members who help establish policy within the state, offer recommendations to SHEAA, govern any institutional challenges, and provide insight.
- Out-of-state institutions go to the Board of Governors to seek authorization if they are degree granting institutions and non-SARA members.
- Institutions will be ready Oct. 1. We received 20-30 emails from institutions interested in applying for membership.

Menia Dykes moved to approve the application and the motion was seconded by Monica Wheatley. **North Carolina's application was approved unanimously.** Effective date for external operation for field experiences is June 13, 2016, and for internal institution applications is Oct. 1, 2016.

South Carolina

Introduction of the South Carolina Application – John Lane, Lane Goodwin, Clay Barton

The Commission voted unanimously to pursue SARA membership in September 2015. Statutory authority was required. On March 14, 2016 House Bill 4639 was signed into law. The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education is designated as the portal entity and collection of fees is permitted. In June 2015 the Commission voted in favor of membership and have since voiced support and excitement for SARA

S-SARA Steering Committee Minutes
June 9, 2016
Atlanta, Georgia

participation. Commission staff members have created a listserv for institutional SARA contacts. Students must submit a complaint to the commission within 2 years of an issue occurring. A 30 to 45-day turnaround on institution applications is anticipated. No new staff will be hired. Mr. Barton will address the day-to-day activities. Fees will replicate those for SARA. Two things to summarize: unity and gratitude. Thanks to Mary Larson and the SREB for repeated insights, great patience with insight and her willingness to call in and visit our decision makers.

Discussion:

- There were no surprises; however, the consensus surrounding this work has been unusual.

Julie Woodruff moved to accept South Carolina's application, and Jeannie Yockey-Fine seconded the motion. **South Carolina's application was approved unanimously.** Effective operational date is July 1, 2016.

Update on SARA Activities in SREB Region and Nationally
Regional Update

- Kris Biesinger provided a quick update of what is going on in the SREB region. With the four states added today SREB will have the following as SARA state members: 14 member states and 1 affiliate. Below is a list of the status of all SREB states plus those interested in joining SREB for SARA purposes.
 - AL—SARA State 10/27/2015
 - AR—SARA State 6/29/2015
 - DE—Application under consideration
 - FL—Comments below
 - GA— SARA State 10/27/2015
 - KY—Comments below
 - LA—SARA State 10/17/2014
 - MD— SARA State 10/27/2015
 - MS— SARA State 10/27/2015
 - OK—SARA State 6/29/2015
 - NC—Application under consideration
 - SC—Application under consideration
 - TN—SARA State 6/29/2015
 - TX— SARA State 10/27/2015
 - VA—SARA State 10/17/2014
 - WV—SARA State 10/17/2014
 - D.C.—Application under consideration
 - PA—Comments below
 - PR— Comments below

Updates from two SREB states yet to join SARA, from representatives in attendance of two states preparing to join the SREB as affiliates, and an update on Puerto Rico from Marshall Hill:

Florida – Theresa Antworth: Institutions are pushing for FL to join SARA. Florida's posture has been to wait and see, live and learn from other experiences due to politics and process. They do not have one entity to oversee higher education. They drafted legislation last year that did not pass.

Kentucky – Travis Powell: The Governor signed SARA legislation in April and it goes into effect in June. They are optimistically looking for an application in October.

Pennsylvania – Patricia Landis: Legislation was reintroduced with the funding formula and a paragraph on SARA. Expecting to have an application ready by October. Fees will be significant to help with the costs of being an affiliate. They expect fees to align with tuition revenue that institutions receive from distance education tuition. These fees can range from \$1000 (for a single course) to \$70,000 (Penn State World Campus) depending upon how active the institution is. Pennsylvania chose the SREB to affiliate with because they hope someday to become a full member and take advantage of the other services including those related to K-12 education

Puerto Rico – Marshall Hill: Institutions are very interested in SARA and a conference call is arranged for tomorrow 6/10.

The Adult Learner and SARA

To introduce The Adult Learner initiative to the group, Phil Moss spoke of SREB's long history in finding ways to work together across the southern states by implementing initiatives that address areas of need. The Adult Learner is such an initiative that grew out of the Electronic Campus with a focus on the needs of the adult learner and degree completion. This initiative is now positioned to move nationally utilizing SARA membership as a way of ensuring educational quality. Lumina has funded this work and now SARA institutions will have the option of listing their programs in The Adult Learner website if they also meet the defined expectations for serving adult learners which are in each committee member's packet (online or blended format, flexible availability, adult friendly in design and acceptance of prior learning). Reach out to campuses that offer adult degree completion programs and encourage them to look into and join the adult learner.

SARA National Update

Marshall Hill provided the following updates from other regional compacts and regarding NC SARA in general:

- Utah is working on its application, will be considered by WICHE in July.
- Hawaii was approved a few weeks ago by WICHE.
- Wisconsin has submitted its application to MHEC, expected to be reviewed in the next month or two.
- New York is moving forward, asking very detailed questions. Application expected sometime this summer.
- Connecticut has passed legislation which is now on the Governor's desk.
- Massachusetts is likely to be one of the last 2 or 3 states to join; however, the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Massachusetts (AICUM) has made joining SARA its #1 goal.
- California has work to do – choosing the portal entity, passing legislation, but hopefully will join in 2017.
- Sept. 19-20 in Chicago there will be a state SARA gathering – each member of SARA should have received information from Mary Larson. One person per member state is invited to attend.
- The Policy and Standards document and the FAQs are being replaced with a single document that will be called the SARA Manual. Hoping to have ready in August.
- NC SARA is planning to provide the portal entity with a quick link to the IPEDS system so when you get an application from a university you can check the FTE with clear instructions to which number the institutions should be looking at and reporting.
- About 700-800 institutions reported their IPEDS numbers; about 100 (over 25 percent) reported 0s across the board for all states. Zero was to be used only when there were no students from that state or when the number of students was less than 10. It seems that we may need to reconsider how to designate the latter. The Data Committee will be asked to recommend any changes moving forward.
- Financial Score is an imperfect system, but it is the only national system that exists. It used to be awarded to all individual institutions. Now the score is calculated for the corporate parent. Need to have a process associated with individual institutions and a way to calculate such in lieu of the DOE score which some institutions do not have.
- NC SARA is separating from WICHE. Moving toward hiring 5 FTE (currently at 2.5 FTE).
- NC SARA has hired a firm for promotion and marketing.
- U.S. Department of Education is making a new rule about interstate distance education. When the rule comes out please read and comment. Expected in a month.
- NC SARA has had virtually 100 percent renewal rate.

Previously Approved SARA States Update

- AL: Joined January 2016; first institution application received in February; currently have 14 institutions - 9 public, 5 private; no staff changes or change in fee for institutions.
- AR: Joined June 2015; first application July 1, 2015; 31 institutions joined - 28 public 3 private.
- GA: Joined November 2015; accepted first application in December; 52 institutions – 45 public, 5 private nonprofit, 2 private profit; no plans to change fees; added 1 staff person to take care of SARA which is a fee based position; roadblocks - no OPEID and financial score.
- LA: SARA expanded quickly – created an immediate revenue increase.

S-SARA Steering Committee Minutes
June 9, 2016
Atlanta, Georgia

- MD: Joined in the fall of 2015; got first application in July; 11 institutions- 4 publics, 7 privates; anticipated having a SARA person but it was not funded so staff person handles SARA along with other responsibilities; decreases in revenue; so far process has been straight forward; fairly new leadership at agency.
- OK: 29 institutions and all is well.
- TN: about a year since our approval; 49 institutions; renewal time is busy time; do not be surprised if your smaller institutions know nothing and are unsure of what they are doing and do not understand the difference between SARA approval and licensure approval – statewide training in July 2016; not a single complaint in a year – we have gotten two complaints from other states that were sent to the appropriate SPE.
- MS: started accepting apps in Feb; got 22 right away and expect to get 4 more in next couple of weeks; have not had any complaints so far and no additional staff were hired.
- TX: joined in October 2015, received applications in December; have no plans for additional staff, might seek authorization to charge a fee to cover affiliate fee; did training webinar with one system and looking to do more.
- VA: 37 institutions – 3 for profits; not charging fees but may be changing staff structure; have advisory committee that meets occasionally; not a specialized SARA complaint process – have VA process that is in accordance with Title IV;

Next Meeting Date

October 27, 2016 – here in ATL; fly in and out meeting. Welcome future suggestions. Receiving further information on state renewals and the process. This meeting will include the election of a chair.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 2:31 p.m.