

National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements

UPDATE NEWSLETTER

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California Analyst Recommends SARA



In a report issued in December 2013, the California Legislative Analyst Office recommended SARA as a good way to solve the problem of excess complexity in interstate operation of distance education programs. The report, entitled [Oversight of Private Colleges in California](#), was primarily an evaluation of the functions and focus of the California Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education, but an entire page was devoted to a discussion of changes in the online educational environment. The analyst's conclusion was that:

Through SARA, the Bureau could oversee online schools enrolling California students with minimal additional workload by recognizing approval from other participating states that meet mutually agreed-upon standards. We recommend the Legislature provide statutory authorization for the Bureau to participate in SARA and to grant reciprocal approval to institutions licensed in other states. In addition to facilitating better protection for California students, this would enable colleges overseen by the Bureau (including those volunteering for business practices review) to receive multistate authorization through an efficient process.

Although California is highly decentralized for purposes of postsecondary oversight, the analyst's report is expected to serve as a catalyst for movement toward recognition of SARA as the best method available to advance the needs of providers of online education while offering adequate student protection.



**National Council
for State Authorization
Reciprocity Agreements**

*A voluntary, regional approach
to state oversight of distance education*



Regional Highlight*: W-SARA

Interest in SARA continues to build across the WICHE region. On December 10, 2013, a W-SARA Regional Forum was held in Denver, Colorado. The event drew over 125 attendees representing public and private colleges and universities, state governing and coordinating boards, state offices of consumer protection, state policy leaders, and more. Sessions included a panel presentation where leaders from Colorado, Nevada, and Washington discussed the challenges and opportunities of state membership in SARA; a detailed review of the state oversight and complaint process; and an introduction to the application process for states and institutions. In the afternoon, each state delegation met in a break-out session to discuss the interest level in SARA, and next steps needed in order for the state to join. A recording of the general sessions from the W-SARA Regional Forum may be found at: <https://www.youtube.com/user/WICHESARA>

W-SARA staff members are visiting states to support SARA discussions in Arizona, Colorado, Oregon, and Washington with others planned throughout the spring. At this point we are pleased with developments and estimate that up to 10 of the WICHE states will join SARA in 2014, with the remainder joining in 2015.

*Future issues to feature news/updates from other regions.

Upcoming Event

Webcast: What's new with SARA?

Update on the State Authorization
Reciprocity Agreement
January 23, 2014
11 a.m. PST / Noon MST
1 p.m. CST / 2 p.m. EST

Featuring:

- Marshall Hill, executive director of the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements
- Rhonda Epper, director of WICHE SARA
- Marianne Boeke, senior research associate at the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS)

Webcast highlights:

- covers key facts about SARA
- instructs how your state and institution can participate
- defines projected timeline for implementation
- runs 75-minutes with plenty of time for questions
- no charge to participate

Links:

[Recorded Webcast](#)

[Presentation Slides](#)

[Questions & Answers from the Webcast](#)

WCET (WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies) is a division of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education.

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