The Nightmare of Obtaining Necessary State Approvals for Distance Education

*SARA to the Rescue*

Why & How

Presentation by:
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Why State Authorization of Distance Education Must Change

The Federal Imperative
- Heightened awareness
- But mandate removed
  - Federal court’s rebuke
  - Congressional concern
- ED response

The continuing dilemma
- Institutions can’t afford complexity & expense
- States can’t afford expense
- Inadequate quality assurance & consumer protection
The Solution: State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements

Concept developed via three efforts

- Presidents Forum/Council of State Governments (CSG)
- The Regional Higher Education Compacts with WICHE as the lead
- The National Commission on the regulation of postsecondary distance education
SARA AS THE SOLUTION

• A national voluntary network of states, accepting the approval institutions from their reciprocity partner states,
• through their respective regional higher education compacts,
• the activities of which will be coordinated by a collaborative national council on state authorization.
The Solution: State Authorization
Reciprocity Agreements

TWO PRINCIPLES

• Reciprocity Requires Trust
  • Between States Seeking Reciprocity
  • Between the Partners in the Federal QA Triad
    • The States
    • Accreditation
    • The Federal Government

• With respect to Regulation: Less is more, unless it is not enough
National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements

A voluntary, regional approach to state oversight of distance education
The Funding Strategy (Preliminary)

Implementation Funding – First Three Years
- Lumina Foundation
- $2.8 million

Sustainability funding
- Institutional fees
  - $2,000 – Institutions up to 2,500 FTE
  - $4,000 – Institutions between 2,500 & 9,900 FTE
  - $6,000 – Institutions with more than 10,000 FTE
The Implementation Schedule

- Program funding received -- August
- National Board Selected -- August
- Regional and National Staff Selected – August/September
- First National Board Meeting – November 1
- Target for Accepting State Applications – 2013
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Major Changes for Institutions

- All must accept “state authorization” for on-line activities
  - New for publics
  - New for exempt private institutions
- Will need only authorization from **HOME** state to operate in all **HOST** states participating in reciprocity states
- Voluntary participation
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Major Changes for Participating States

- Will need “authority” to enter into reciprocity agreements – state legislation
- Will need to conform regulations to meet standards
  - Enhancement for some
    - Exempt institutions can’t play
    - Consumer protection regs must include academic malfeasance
  - Different standards for some
- Voluntary participation
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Metrics of Success

- State Participation
  - 50% within two years
  - 80% within four years

- Institutional Participation
  - Metrics not established
  - Most must participate for effort to be successful

- Federal recognition
  - No perceived need for further regulation
The Future of State Authorization

Will institutions remain the object of review?
- MOOCS
- Program Partnerships
- Outsourcing of Core Activities

Is Licensure the next avenue for reciprocity?
- Teaching and Law already happening
- Nursing, clinical psychology, etc. -- nsm

Will regulation survive the market philosophy rage?