

**State of Wisconsin  
Distance Learning Authorization Board (DLAB)**

**December 1, 2020  
Virtual Meeting**

**Minutes**

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Members present:

Secretary Dawn Crim, Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS)  
Dr. Morna Foy, Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS)  
Dr. Russell Swagger, Wisconsin Tribal Colleges and Universities  
Dr. Rolf Wegenke, Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (WAICU)

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Members absent:

Dr. Anny Morrobel-Sosa, University of Wisconsin System (UW System)

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Others present:

Ms. Monique Currie, WTCS  
Ms. Joan Gage, DSPS  
Dr. Connie Hutchison, State of Wisconsin Higher Educational Aids Board (HEAB)  
Ms. Paige Smith, UW System  
Ms. Rebecca Larson, WAICU  
Ms. Sonja Umberger, WAICU

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**Call to Order and Open Meeting Statement – Dr. Rolf Wegenke, DLAB Chair**

Dr. Wegenke, DLAB Chair, called the meeting to order at 11:04 a.m. and stated a quorum was present. Dr. Wegenke requested that Ms. Umberger read the Open Meeting Statement as follows: “The December 1, 2020 meeting of the Wisconsin Distance Learning Authorization Board and all other meetings of this board are open to the public in compliance with State Statute. Notice of the meeting has been sent to the press in an attempt to make the general public of Wisconsin aware of the time, place and agenda of the meeting.”

**Action: Approval of September 10, 2020 DLAB meeting minutes – Dr. Wegenke**

The minutes of the September 10, 2020 meeting were approved unanimously (Foy/Crim motion). The minutes will be posted to the DLAB website.

### **Report of the Chair – Dr. Wegenke**

Dr. Wegenke reported that in November NC-SARA announced three new board members: a Texas Community College president, and State Portal Entity staff from Arizona and the District of Columbia. This is important given Wisconsin's advocacy to have broader representation. The new board members began their three-year terms with NC-SARA on October 29, 2020 and can serve a maximum of two terms. The three new board members are: Lanna Dueck, executive director of the Arizona SARA Council (Arizona's portal entity design is similar to Wisconsin's in that they have higher education sector representation that makes up their portal entity board); Angela Lee, executive director of the DC Higher Education Licensure Commission; and Carlos Morales, president of Tarrant County Colleges Connect Campus. The board member from California rotated off the board. Many states opposed seating California on the NC-SARA Board in the first place arguing California should not have been a voting member as it is not a member NC-SARA, which would take an enactment of the California legislature.

Dr. Foy reported that a request/proposal was not formally taken up from M-SARA related to rules about responsibilities of institutions to determine and inform students whether students can practice in other states. This issue is particularly challenging for technical colleges with many licensed professionals, health care providers, law enforcement. Dr. Foy commented that Ms. Heegaard did talk to colleagues at the referenced meeting—but the board did not formally take up that issue. Dr. Foy expected this issue will be brought up again in the next biennial NC-SARA meeting. She is hopeful for a more unified opposition at that time to NC-SARA's overreach and the steering committee has formally requested that in a policy survey. MHEC will reach to Compact counterparts—to get the Compacts in alignment.

### **Action: Election of 2021 Officers**

Dr. Wegenke said there has been a tradition for a rotation of officers on the Board. Dr. Wegenke proposed the following slate of officers for election: Anny Morrobel-Sosa, Chair; Morna Foy, Vice Chair; and Rolf Wegenke, Secretary.

A motion was made to reelect the slate of officers as presented (Crim/Foy motion). The slate was approved unanimously.

### **Action: Review and Approval of Institutional Applications and Renewal Applications**

#### **Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities – Rebecca Larson**

Ms. Larson provided an update of the renewals in the Wisconsin non-profit, independent institutions sector. Eleven colleges: Alverno College, Cardinal Stritch University, Carthage College, Edgewood College, Lakeland University, Maranatha Baptist University, Medical College of Wisconsin, Mount Mary University, Nashotah House, Viterbo University, and Wisconsin Lutheran College submitted their renewals and have been approved.

Ms. Larson reported three new institutions, Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design, Ripon College, and Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology submitted institutional applications. All meet the federal financial responsibility composite score, demonstrate they are authorized to operate in this state, provided Higher Learning Commission (HLC) accreditation, provided links to their complaint systems, and had the appropriate signatures, acknowledgements, and attestations made.

A motion was made to approve the applications of Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design, Ripon College, and Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology (Crim/Swagger motion). The motion carried unanimously.

#### Wisconsin Technical College System – Monique Currie

Ms. Currie provided an update of the renewals in the Wisconsin technical colleges sector. Four colleges: Western Technical College, Mid-State Technical College, Moraine Park Technical College, and Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College have submitted their renewals and have been approved. She reported that NC-SARA has been flexible with payments during pandemic.

#### **Report: Staff Updates**

#### NC-SARA National Portal Meeting Report – Monique Currie

Ms. Currie provided the Board with highlights of the NC-SARA National Portal Meeting, which was held virtually over the course of four days in September. The main events were updates provided by NC-SARA president Lori Williams and staff.

- Ms. Williams remarked that NC-SARA relies on accreditors for quality assurance. NC-SARA requested that NCHEMS (National Center for Higher Education Management Systems) conduct a study to review how creditors are using C-RAC (Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions) Guidelines. The report should be available in spring of 2021.
- NC-SARA's three-year Strategic Plan Executive Summary, approved in May of 2020, has now been posted on the NC-SARA website. Ms. Currie pointed to Strategic Objective 1, 3.(c), which reads, "The media recognizes NC-SARA as the organization that sets national standards for interstate distance education."
- NC-SARA announced a national advisory committee to advise NC-SARA on training needs. The committee will meet quarterly. Wisconsin sector staff was contacted to serve as a volunteer for the committee and Joan Gage volunteered. There was a presentation on a searchable online catalog, a project first announced first two years ago with an anticipated spring 2021 launch. Colleges are required to submit information for online programs to NC-SARA staff.
- NC-SARA released preliminary, interim findings on cost saving projects broken down by state. NC-SARA estimates the organization has saved participating members \$5.6 million. NC-SARA has received push back from the states. Wisconsin's information regarding an

EAB (Educational Approval Board) structure was incorrect and the same was true for other states. States are awaiting revised findings of NC-SARA's model.

- Salesforce software is used to track and bill institutions for participants. There are two upcoming changes to the software: (1) an internal collaboration chat function (concerns have been raised that it may run afoul with Wisconsin Open Records law), and (2) requiring or allowing NC-SARA to send noticing and sending billing reminders to participants (which will be a fundamental change). Ms. Currie sent an email to NC-SARA requesting clarification on these issues.
- Ms. Smith made a presentation on DLAB's appeal process at the NC-SARA conference. It was very well received by other state portal entities.

#### NC-SARA Branch Campus Working Group – Rebecca Larson

Ms. Larson reported the NC-SARA branch campus working group was formed to address concerns from states that they do not have authority over branch campuses. The co-chairs are Susan Heegaard and Belle Whelan, and there are 10 members of the working group (board members, NC-SARA staff, state portal entity/regulators, and institutional representatives). The working group has met and proposed the following two solutions: (1) to allow the institution to have more than one home state, and (2) to allow the complaining student to file their complaint with state in the state of their choosing (either the student's home state or the state where the campus is headquartered). A white paper is being developed, and the goal is to have a final recommendation at the April 3, 2021 NC-SARA board meeting. Ms. Larson will continue to monitor and provide updates to the Board as needed.

#### Complaints Report – Joan Gage

Ms. Gage reported no complaints for 3rd quarter from NC-SARA.

#### **Action: Approval of DLAB Annual Report – Rebecca Larson**

Ms. Larson provided a summary of the 2020 DLAB Annual Report. The report was drafted with information from all sectors and follows the same format as in recent years. The report begins with a reminder to the Legislature of the creation and purpose of DLAB, followed by a summary and purpose of the 2020 meetings, including the Wisconsin renewal application. The section on officers for 2021 will be updated after today's meeting. She included a general discussion on the concerns DLAB has with NC-SARA staying true to the mission as originally established and policy concerns. The report includes sections on institutional approvals, renewals, and enrollment. Exempt institutions are displayed on the DLAB website and are annually provided to HEAB (Higher Educational Aids Board) to be published in the *Wisconsin Administrative Register*. The report closes with anticipated activities for 2021 and noting that DLAB continues to serve an important role in facilitating the ability of Wisconsin-based higher education institutions to expand their distance education offerings across state borders and to reduce the associated regulatory burden on the institutions.

Dr. Foy requested that a stronger statement be included in the report to note that no complaints have been filed in Wisconsin for many years and that the structure DLAB has in place is protecting our students. She also requested that the report mention that the pandemic has accelerated interest in distance education and has also laid bare the inequities in opportunities for delivery of distance education.

A motion was made to finalize and submit the DLAB annual report (Foy/Crim motion). The motion passed unanimously.

### **2021 Meeting Dates**

Dr. Wegenke asked if Board meetings in May, early September, and early December worked well. There was a consensus that those months work well for meetings. Dr. Wegenke then asked that Dr. Morrobel-Sosa and her staff coordinate and set dates for 2021.

### **Discussion: Other Items**

Dr. Foy encouraged meetings to be virtual through September 2021.

### **Adjournment**

There was no further discussion and the meeting adjourned by unanimous consent at 11:53 a.m. (Foy/Wegenke motion).