



MEDIA RELEASE

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Kansas and Missouri join SARA

Boulder, Colorado – Kansas and Missouri have been approved by the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC) to join the Midwestern State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (M-SARA). These states join 15 others (Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Indiana, Louisiana, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Virginia, Washington and West Virginia) as members of SARA. SARA is a nationwide initiative of states that will make distance education courses more accessible to students across state lines and make it easier for states to regulate and institutions to participate in interstate distance education. The effort is funded by a \$3 million grant from Lumina Foundation, \$200,000 from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and fees paid by institutions.

"This is such an exciting time at the Compact with more states becoming a part of SARA," said Mr. Larry Isaak, MHEC president. "We expect to receive more state applications by year end and the total number of states nationally to join the agreement is likely to be twenty by that time."

The Kansas Board of Regents will serve as the state "portal" agency for SARA. The Board coordinates the state's 32 public higher education institutions (six state universities, one municipal university, nineteen community colleges, and six technical colleges) along with administering the state's student financial aid, adult education, high school equivalency, and career and technical education programs, while also regulating all out-of-state and private postsecondary institutions who wish to operate in Kansas.

"We believe that the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) will help reduce the cost of providing online instruction, broaden course offerings for Kansans, and enhance interstate cooperation," said Dr. Andy Tompkins, president and CEO of the Kansas Board of Regents.

Serving as Missouri's "portal" agency is the Missouri Department of Higher Education, which serves more than 450,000 students through 13 public four-year universities, 20 public two-year colleges, one public two-year technical college, 25 independent colleges and universities and more than 155 proprietary and private career schools.

"The State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement puts important measures in place that will help expand higher education opportunities for Missouri students. SARA will enable us to streamline the process of offering online education for our state's colleges and universities and strengthen our oversight of online education programs," said Dr. David Russell, Missouri commissioner of higher education.

The SARA agreements are overseen by the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA) and are being implemented by the four regional higher education interstate compacts: the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC), the New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE), the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) and the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE). Once a state joins SARA, accredited degree-granting institutions in the state that offer distance education courses can seek approval from their state to participate in SARA. When approved, these institutions will be able to operate in other participating SARA states without seeking independent authorization from those states. Participating in SARA is entirely voluntary for institutions, as it is for states.

"This progress in the initiative illustrates the importance of SARA in providing a streamlined alternative to the state-by-state approach institutions must currently follow to gain needed authorizations to serve students in states other than their own," explained Marshall A. Hill, executive director of NC-SARA.

As of November 14, 2014, SARA-enabling legislation has passed in an additional eight states and three states have determined that no legislation is needed to enable participation in SARA.

About NC-SARA, MHEC, NEBHE, SREB, WICHE, and Lumina Foundation

The National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA) is a voluntary, regional approach to state oversight of postsecondary distance education. The initiative is administered by the country's four regional higher education compacts (MHEC, NEBHE, SREB and WICHE) and overseen by NC-SARA. States and institutions that choose to participate agree to operate under common standards and procedures, providing a more uniform and less costly regulatory environment for institutions, more focused oversight responsibilities for states and better resolution of student complaints.

www.nc-sara.org

The Midwestern Higher Education Compact is a nonprofit regional organization assisting Midwestern states in advancing higher education through interstate cooperation and resource sharing. MHEC seeks to fill its interstate mission through programs that expand postsecondary opportunity and success; promote innovative approaches to improving institutional and system productivity; improve affordability to students and states; and enhance connectivity between higher education and the workplace. Member states are: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota and Wisconsin.

www.mhec.org

The New England Board of Higher Education promotes greater educational opportunities and services for the residents of New England. It works across six New England states to engage and assist leaders in the assessment, development, and implementation of sound education practices and policies of regional significance; promote policies, programs, and best practices to assist the states in implementing important regional higher education policies; promote regional cooperation and programs that encourage the efficient use and sharing of educational resources; and provide leadership to strengthen the relationship between higher education and the economic well-being of New England.

www.nebhe.org

The Southern Regional Education Board works with 16 member states to improve public education at every level, from pre-K through Ph.D. SREB is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization headquartered in Atlanta. SREB states currently participate in SREB's Electronic Campus Regional Reciprocity Agreement, and SREB is working closely with SARA to expand reciprocity nationwide. Member states are Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia.

www.sreb.org

The Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education and its 16 members work collaboratively to expand educational access and excellence for all citizens of the West. By promoting innovation, cooperation, resource sharing, and sound public policy among states and institutions, WICHE strengthens higher education's contributions to the region's social, economic and civic life. WICHE's members include: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawai'i, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, Wyoming and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana.

www.wiche.edu

Lumina Foundation is an independent, private foundation committed to increasing the proportion of Americans with high-quality degrees, certificates and other credentials to 60 percent by 2025. Lumina's outcomes-based approach focuses on helping to design and build an accessible, responsive and accountable higher education system while fostering a national sense of urgency for action to achieve Goal 2025. For more information logon to www.luminafoundation.org.