

**MINUTES OF THE NC-SARA BOARD MEETING  
MAY 8-9, 2019  
THE WESTIN DENVER INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT  
DENVER, COLORADO**

**NOTICE OF MEETING**

Notice of the time and place of the NC-SARA Board Meeting was posted on the NC-SARA website and given to the Board members, regional compact SARA staff, and other interested parties.

An agenda is maintained in the NC-SARA office at 3005 Center Green Drive, Suite 130, Boulder, Colorado, 80301 and online at [www.nc-sara.org](http://www.nc-sara.org).

**Welcome and introductions**

Paul E. Lingenfelter, Chair

**Board members in attendance:**

Barbara Ballard  
Chris Bustamante  
Kathryn Dodge  
Dianne Harrison  
Susan Heegaard  
Teresa Lubbers  
Leah Matthews  
Demarée Michelau  
Pat O'Brien  
Stephen Pruitt  
Pam Quinn  
Ed Ray  
George Ross  
Kathleen C. Santora  
Paul Shiffman  
Peter Smith  
Michael Thomas  
Larry Tremblay  
Leroy Wade

**Board members in attendance  
by phone:**

No one.

**Board members not in attendance:**

Belle Wheelan

**NC-SARA staff present:**

Marianne Boeke  
Victoria Brieske  
Marshall A. Hill  
Mary A. Larson  
Holly Martinez  
Nick Ortiz  
Jennifer Shanika  
Shannon Walker

**Regional compact staff present:**

Wanda Barker, SREB  
Jennifer Dahlquist, MHEC  
Emily Jacobson, MHEC  
Elisa Jaden, SREB  
Shelley Plutto, WICHE  
Christina Sedney, WICHE  
Rachael Stachowiak, NEBHE

**Guests:**

Jim Hall  
Ted Marchese, AGB Search  
Jeannie Yockey-Fine, Hogan Lovells

Meeting was called to order at 11:47 AM (Mountain Standard Time).

**Agenda Item I (ACTION):** Approval of minutes of the November 1, 2018 meeting

Motion to approve – Michael Thomas

Seconded – Larry Tremblay

Approval passed unanimously, with no suggested revisions.

**Agenda Item II:** Update on the progress of the SARA initiative

a) Marshall A. Hill, NC-SARA

NC-SARA President and Chief Financial Officer (President/CEO) Marshall A. Hill shared with the Board that the SARA initiative is currently in good standing. He directed the meeting attendees' attention to the section of the Board Book that featured charts and illustrations of the initiative's growth in state and institution membership (i.e. participation), from January 2014 to April 2019. At the time of the meeting, Hill announced, 49 of 50 states (California being the exception) are active members of the SARA initiative. One district (the District of Columbia) and two territories (Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands) are also recognized affiliates. As of May 8, 1,965 institutions are participating in SARA; the initiative has an annual institutional renewal rate of 99 percent.

One challenge currently being faced by NC-SARA originates from institutions that are seeking to participate in SARA, despite not meeting the SARA eligibility requirements.

b) Susan Heegaard, Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC)

President Susan Heegaard of MHEC informed the Board that the Midwestern Compact is home to 562 (or, 30%) of the institutions currently participating in SARA. Renewal of both institutions and states in the region remains steady, with Iowa being the most recent member to be reapproved.

c) Michael Thomas, New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE)

President Michael Thomas shared with the Board that NEBHE currently has 231 institutions participating in the SARA initiative, with the state of Massachusetts continuing to bring more institutions to the initiative. New England states continue to renew. A challenging issue currently being faced by the region is the closure and/or merging of New England institutions.

d) Stephen Pruitt, Southern Regional Education Board (SREB)

President Stephen Pruitt of SREB informed the Board that the SREB region continues to support 45 percent of the states and institutions currently participating in SARA. New regional steering committee members have been elected in the District of Columbia and North Carolina. A membership issue has arisen with the state of Texas; however, President Pruitt and his staff are confident that the matter will be resolved in the near future.

e) Demarée Michelau, Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE)

Newly-appointed President of WICHE Demarée Michelau introduced herself to Board, along with regional staff members Christina Sedney (Director of Policy Initiatives and State Authorization) and Shelley Plutto (Administrative Assistant III).

President Michelau informed the Board that the Western compact is home to 16 SARA member states, with California being the only WICHE state (and the only state in the U.S.) that has not yet applied to join the initiative. State renewals remain consistent, with New Mexico and Wyoming being the most recent WICHE SARA members to be reapproved.

**Agenda Item III (ACTION):** Report and recommendations of the Executive Committee – Paul E. Lingenfelter, Chair

a) **(ACTION):** Modification of the *NC-SARA Bylaws*

Motion to approve – Pat O’Brien  
Seconded – Peter Smith

Chair Lingenfelter briefly reviewed the proposed changes to the *NC-SARA Bylaws*. Primary recommendations included: (1) updating the language of the *Bylaws*, to read in present tense rather than future (tense); and (2) change the language in such a way as to assure policymakers and students of SARA’s overarching mission.

Board member Kathleen Santora suggested that the *Bylaws* be changed to include the words “federal policymakers” in Item C, Section 3 (following the word “accreditors.”)

Motion to approve – Kathleen Santora  
No second.

Concern was expressed by President Pruitt over the inclusion of the word “federal” in the *Bylaws*. It was pointed out that the use of the word “policymakers” would be more consistent with the overall language of the document.

A modified version of the language for Item C, Section 3 is featured in the excerpt below in red (i.e. red and underlined):

“Building public awareness of and support for SARA through regular communications to students, states, accreditors, institutional al leaders and other stakeholders.”

The original motion was withdrawn and Board members agreed that the inclusion of the words “other stakeholders” would be a reasonable modification to Item C, Section 3.

NC-SARA staff will work with Chair Lingenfelter to finalize the new language in the latter section.

Another area of the *Bylaws* that was addressed for revision pertained to the nomination and terms of Board members.

It was agreed that the nomination process would remain open to all members of the higher education community, with a public call announced on the NC-SARA website.

On page 28, regarding Board member term limits, the following change was proposed: “There should be no designated term of office for the presidents...”

Motion to approve changes (as noted and discussed) – Larry Tremblay  
 Seconded – Susan Heegaard  
 Motion passed unanimously.

- b) **(ACTION):** Nomination of Susan Heegaard to membership on the Executive Committee for a term ending at the close of the fall 2019 Board Meeting.

Motion to nominate – Larry Tremblay  
 Nomination passed unanimously.

**Action Item IV (ACTION):** Finance Committee report and FY 2020 budget – Leroy Wade, Treasurer

- a) Committee report  
 Treasurer Leroy Wade provided an overview of the Finance Committee’s analysis of NC-SARA’s financial activities since November 2018. NC-SARA’s revenue continues to exceed expenditures.

A proposal to invest NC-SARA’s reserve funds has been developed by Marshall Hill and approved by the Finance Committee. NC-SARA, with the assistance of TIAA, will divide the organization’s reserves into smaller amounts and invest the money into Certificates of Deposit (CDs) at different banks. An average annual return of 2 percent is expected.

- b) FY 2020 budget  
 Treasurer Leroy Wade addressed both the key points and proposals for the NC-SARA budget for the 2020 fiscal year. Additional funding was requested for the following areas/actions: an increase in allocations to regional compacts; an increase in reserve funding; salaries and benefits for two additional staff members.

Board member Pat O’Brien requested that copies of NC-SARA’s most recent quarterly financial statements be shared with the full Board along with an overview of staff benefits, such as insurance and retirement.

Board member Ed Ray recommended that the Chair of the Finance Committee provide a full financial report at all future meetings, to ensure that money is present and being allocated appropriately. NC-SARA President/CEO Hill agreed and offered to provide a current financial overview to the Board.

Motion to pass budget – Leroy Wade  
 Seconded – Leah Matthews  
 Approval passed unanimously.

**Agenda Item V (ACTION):** Modifications to the *SARA Manual*

NC-SARA President/CEO Marshall A. Hill guided Board members through the revisions that he recommended be made to the *SARA Manual*. Some of the key areas that were mentioned in the overview are listed below.

- **Definitions that were added:** branch campus, main campus, and central administrative unit

- **Changes to the appeals process:** Regional Compacts and State Portals are to establish an individualized appeal process for SARA-participating institutions
- **Policy additions:** how SARA will address and assist SARA-participating institutions that have been affected by a catastrophic event

**New policy language:** Section 8.3 – requesting substantial changes to SARA policies  
Following the overview, Chair Lingenfelter opened the floor for questions and suggestions.

Board member Paul Shiffman suggested the addition of the word “cross-border” or “interstate” to page 2, paragraph 1, line 3, in Section 8. President/CEO Hill agreed.

Board member Pat O’Brien addressed certain language in the appeals process and mandatory arbitration sections on page 20 and 32, respectively. MHEC President Heegaard agreed with O’Brien about the language of the appeals process section; President Heegaard recommended that an additional six months be provided states and regional compacts to develop the new appeals procedures. President Hill agreed that the deadlines would be extended.

Motion to approve the recommended modifications to the *SARA Manual* – Michael Thomas

Seconded – Stephen Pruitt

Approval passed unanimously.

Additional edits will be made to the *SARA Manual* and the latest version will be uploaded to the NC-SARA by the end of May 2019. PowerPoints and webinars will also be available for download.

#### **Agenda Item VI:** Information items – Marshall A. Hill

- a) Enrollments and experiential learning placement reporting  
NC-SARA President/CEO Hill asked staff member Marianne Boeke to brief the Board about the annual Enrollment and Out-of-State Learning Placements (OOSLP) data SARA-participating institutions submit to NC-SARA.

Boeke shared that the reporting period for 2019 will begin on May 14 and conclude on June 4. In 2018, institution compliance of reporting (both enrollments and placements) was excellent. Although not required at the time, 297 institutions voluntarily submitted data for the OOSLP report. In 2019, the reporting of out-of-state learning placements is mandatory.

- b) Federal negotiated rulemaking

At present, federal negotiated rulemaking remains an ongoing challenge. In the winter of 2018, President/CEO Hill met with the senior staff of the U.S. Department of Education. Senior ED staff was very complimentary of SARA.

The negotiated rulemaking process has reached consensus and basically affirmed the rules affecting state authorization of distance education issued by ED in December 2016.

- c) Update on website, student and institutional support, and searchable catalog of academic programs offered by SARA participating institutions

Staff expects a new NC-SARA website will be made available by the end of May 2019. The site has been redesigned to feature more information about student and institution support, including PowerPoint and webinar presentations available for download. It will also feature a searchable catalog of academic programs offered by voluntarily participating SARA institutions, which will be available in the summer of 2019.

d) Staffing and staff activities

President/CEO Hill introduced to the Board NC-SARA's new staff member: Nick Ortiz, Assistant for Student and Institution Support. He also presented to the Board a list of the activities and presentations that the NC-SARA staff have participated in since the fall 2018 meeting. That list follows:

**Staff Activities and Presentations  
November 1, 2018 – May 1, 2019**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>EVENT</b>
Monthly	WCET SAN Open Forums
Monthly	WCET SAN Monthly Calls and Webinars
Monthly	Texas Out of State Activities Compliance Calls
Monthly	SARA Director Calls
November 1, 2018	Quality Matters Conference
November 1 – 2, 2018	SAN Ohio Meeting
November 2, 2018	WICHE Steering Committee Meeting
November 6 – 7, 2018	PA-SARA Conference
November 7 – 8, 2018	VA-SARA Conference
November 15 – 16, 2018	UT-SARA Meeting
November 28 – 30, 2018	IFWE Conference
December 3 – 4, 2018	NC-SARA Data Committee Meeting
December 4 – 5, 2018	Credential Registry Learn and Build Summit: Putting Ideas into Action (Credential Engine)
December 12 – 14, 2018	NEBHE Steering Committee Meeting
December 18, 2018	W-SARA Autumn Meeting
January 21 – 28, 2019	CCME Annual Conference
January 28 – 30, 2019	CHEA Annual Conference
February 12 – 13, 2019	NC-SARA Student Catalog Conversation
February 27 – March 1, 2019	Higher Learning Partners Meeting
March 3 – 6, 2019	South by Southwest Education Conference
March 5 – 6, 2019	SAN Basic Workshop

Financial information and available quarterly statements for FY 2019 were distributed to all Board members.

**BREAK / DISMISSAL OF STAFF at 3:27 PM**

Board members reconvened on Thursday, May 9, at 8:30 AM

**Agenda Item VII (ACTION):** Executive session

During the executive session the Board interviewed candidates to succeed Marshall Hill as President and CEO of NC-SARA. After those interviews and consequent discussion, the Board selected Dr. Lori Williams, currently Vice President of the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC), an accrediting body overseeing institutions in California, Hawaii and the Pacific. She subsequently accepted with pleasure and will begin service on August 1, 2019.

**Agenda Item VIII:** Questions, comments, reflections from council members

**Adjourn**