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CONTACT

media@nc-sara.org

NC-SARA Board Votes to Continue Use of Federal Financial Composite Scores

BOULDER, CO – The National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA) Board voted unanimously during its Spring 2020 meeting on Tuesday, May 6 to continue its use of federal financial composite scores as a measure to evaluate institutional eligibility for SARA membership.

The official Board statement on this matter is as follows:

Since the impact of COVID-19 will not show in the scores for two years, and since NC-SARA permits states to provide a degree of flexibility in considering additional financial information in decision making, NC-SARA reaffirms its reliance on the use of the federal financial responsibility scores. In the meanwhile, NC-SARA urges the U.S. Department of Education to act promptly to complete its review of and improve its standards and procedures for assessing financial stability and responsibility and make improvements for both the short and long term.

NC-SARA President and CEO Dr. Lori Williams said, “Now more than ever, NC-SARA has a responsibility to maintain strong standards to assure the quality of interstate distance learning, and keeping watch over the financial health of institutions is an important accountability pillar that will remain a key part of our evaluative process. However, we also recognize the fiscal constraints institutions are facing as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The NC-SARA Board voted to continue our use of the federal financial composite scores while reiterating our call for the Department of Education to explore new and enhanced standards to better evaluate institutions’ financial standing. We look forward to working with the Department and other stakeholders to find an appropriate resolution to this issue that will serve both institutions and students fairly.”

For more information about the Spring 2020 Board meeting, visit www.nc-sara.org.

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The National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA) is a voluntary, interstate reciprocal 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 coordinated 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