

**State of Wisconsin  
Distance Learning Authorization Board**

**September 29, 2016**

**Wisconsin Technical College System  
Lehrmann Room**

**MINUTES**

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Members present:      Dr. Morna Foy, WTCS  
                                 Dr. Ray Cross, UW System (via telephone)  
                                 Dr. Rolf Wegenke, WAICU  
                                 Mr. David Dies, EAB  
                                 Ms. Barbara Lundberg, Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Community College  
                                 (via telephone)

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Others present:        Dr. Stephen Kolison, UW System (via telephone)  
                                 Ms. Paige Reed, UW System (via telephone)  
                                 Ms. Rebecca Larson, WAICU  
                                 Ms. Kathy Dutter, WAICU  
                                 Ms. Nancy Merrill, WTCS

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**Call to Order and Open Meeting Statement**

Dr. Foy, DLAB chair, called the meeting to order. Dr. Foy asked Ms. Dutter to read the Open Meeting Statement as follows: "The September 29 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." Dr. Foy requested Ms. Dutter take role. Everyone listed above was present, with Dr. Cross, Dr. Kolison, and Ms. Reed participating via telephone.

**Chair's Report**

Dr. Foy stated that Ms. Merrill had attended the Midwest State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (M-SARA) portal meeting in Chicago on behalf of the Distance Learning Authorization Board (DLAB). She reported that few student complaints rising to the level of the portal entities have been filed. She explained that this likely is a positive sign, but cautioned that it was important to make sure students are not having difficulty understanding the process. The National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA) will be considering the issue of complaints. Higher education in Wisconsin is concerned about NC-SARA's involvement in the complaint process. Wisconsin law and precedent is that the institutions should have primary responsibility for dealing with student complaints. NC-SARA also has concerns that states are not reporting the home state of the students they are serving. If a state is serving less than ten students from a particular state, such reporting is not necessary. Mr. Don

Madelung of Wisconsin and a MHEC commissioner was approved unanimously by the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC) commissioners to serve on the M-SARA Steering Committee.

It was also reported that the dissolution of the for-profit ITT Technical College was discussed at the portal meeting. The DLAB members discussed the effects on the students and the options those students had with transferring credits and discharging their student loans. Mr. Dies stated that the Educational Approval Board (EAB) has some guidance for students on its website.

Dr. Foy reported the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) has also put out information. She noted that about the same time ITT announced its closure, the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) announced it had removed the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS) from its list of approved accreditors. ITT had been accredited by ACICS. There were 11 ACICS accredited schools that had been approved for SARA—none in Wisconsin. Those students will no longer qualify for Title IV federal student aid, and the schools have 18 months to be accredited by another accrediting agency. Even though there are no ACICS accredited institutions based in Wisconsin that applied to DLAB, and therefore do not fall under DLAB's jurisdiction, there may still be Wisconsin students attending one of them headquartered in another state.

**Action: Approval of August 25, 2016 DLAB Meeting Minutes**

Dr. Foy thanked Ms. Dutter for her work on the minutes and reported to the board that she had given some minor corrections to Ms. Dutter. The minutes were approved unanimously (Cross/Dies motion).

Ms. Lundberg asked that her contact information be updated on the DLAB web page for students. She also noted the complaint form was not yet active. Ms. Merrill explained that the website was still under development, but that those changes would be made.

**Action: Review of Institutional Applications Recommended for SARA Participation**

Dr. Foy emphasized that a link to the hard copies of the applications under review today had been sent out with the agenda to the board members.

The colleges and universities presented by Ms. Larson of WAICU were: Carthage College, Edgewood College, Maranatha Baptist University, Medical College of Wisconsin, Nashotah House Theological Seminary, Northland College, and Viterbo University. Dr. Wegenke explained that Maranatha was not a member of WAICU, but as a private nonprofit university, fell under WAICU's purview for DLAB. Ms. Larson listed the documents provided by the institutions, noting that they all met the criteria established for membership. All the institutions were accredited by the Higher Learning Commission except Nashotah House, which was accredited by the Commission on Accrediting of the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada. Ms. Larson stated that Maranatha's USDE score was not listed on the USDE website, but that they had been able to obtain it from USDE. DLAB unanimously accepted the applications from the above listed institutions (Cross/Dies motion).

Dr. Foy inquired whether the institutions had adhered to the two-week deadline, and if two weeks had been sufficient time to process the applications. Ms. Larson responded that all the institutions had met the deadline, and that two weeks was enough time.

Ms. Merrill presented ten applications from WTCS: Chippewa Valley Technical College, Fox Valley Technical College, Lakeshore Technical College, Madison Area Technical College, Mid-state Technical College, Milwaukee Area Technical College, Moraine Park Technical College, Northeast Wisconsin Technical College, Southwest Wisconsin Technical College, Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College. She stated that the remaining unapproved institutions did not have a timeline of when they would be applying. Ms. Merrill stated that the colleges all provided the required affirmation and met the minimum standards required for M-SARA participation. The WTCS applications listed above were approved unanimously (Wegenke/Cross motion).

### **Review of Reporting Requirements**

Dr. Foy thanked Ms. Larson for putting together the DLAB and institutional reporting requirements. Ms. Larson reviewed the requirements for DLAB's report to the Governor and Legislature, from NC-SARA, and the annual reporting of distance education data from the institutions to NC-SARA, all of which were outlined in the meeting materials.

Dr. Foy requested a consensus from the board to designate that staff start designing the annual report due to the Governor and Legislature on January 30 of each year. DLAB will meet to review the report mid-January. The board members all agreed.

As the list of exempt institutions already exists, Dr. Foy suggested her office provide that to the Legislative Reference Bureau for publication in the administrative register. The board members agreed. Dr. Wegenke noted that there should be a cross reference for Title IV certification as it appears on the USDE website and is updated quarterly. The cross referencing is needed to catch the occasional change and to assure that the state and federal governments are acting in concert.

### **Discussion of Next Meeting Dates**

Dr. Foy suggested DLAB schedule a meeting in December to review any other potential applications, and that a firm meeting be scheduled mid-January to approve the annual report. Dr. Wegenke requested a possible November conference call for some of the nonprofit institutions' applications that were expected, especially as WAICU had already received one. After a brief discussion, it was decided that an electronic vote was not suitable as there would be no actual meeting that the public could attend. Dr. Foy stated that staff could arrange an earlier meeting to review any applications.

In response to a question from Dr. Foy, Ms. Lundberg stated that she did not know when the Menomonee Nation would be applying. She explained that because Lac Courte Oreilles (LCO) was on probation and undergoing an accreditation visit, they would be waiting until the probation was removed before applying.

Mr. Dies reported that EAB had received a referral from the Department of Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) regarding a complaint from a Wisconsin student attending American Intercontinental University (AIU). Mr. Dies stated he was having difficulty finding the home state and portal agency for AIU because NC-SARA lists participating colleges and universities by state and there is no search function by institution. Dr. Foy confirmed that the student's home state portal agency is supposed to be a point of contact for students to get direction on the complaint process. Dr. Foy agreed that she, Mr. Madelung, or Ms. Merrill would inform NC-SARA of the needed change to their website. DLAB's website would point students attending out-of-state institutions to the NC-SARA website.

Dr. Foy requested that staff give thought to how to track contacts, inquiries, and complaints. DLAB is supposed to have a facilitator role, and there needs to be a record of whether people are reaching out to DLAB and how DLAB is referring or addressing the issues. Ms. Reed stated she had already been working with UW institutions to resolve some of these issues, not only for Wisconsin students, but also for states that have misinterpreted SARA conditions with regard to field trips and internships. Dr. Foy expressed hope that the tracking process would not be a huge burden at the end of the quarter but be an easy way of keeping track of contacts.

Dr. Wegenke suggested that an educational session for DATCP and other agencies might be advisable. Ms. Merrill suggested that recommendation be in the first annual report as part of DLAB's plan for 2017.

Dr. Foy reiterated that the plan for the next meeting was a short telephone call to approve a few more institutions and then also to share recommendations for data collection with an eye for fulfilling DLAB's responsibilities to point students to other states' complaint processes and to collect data to give the Legislature a thorough description of DLAB's activities.

Ms. Merrill stated that staff would be meeting next week to work on DLAB's website. Dr. Foy suggested a target of having the website up and running by the next DLAB meeting.

#### **Adjournment**

With no further comments, the meeting adjourned by members' consent.

Respectfully submitted,



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Rolf Wegenke, President, WAICU  
Secretary, DLAB