



## Maricopa County Community College District Governing Board Minutes September 30, 2014

A Special Session of the Maricopa County Community College District Governing Board was scheduled to be held beginning at 10:30 a.m. at the District Support Services Center, 2411 West 14th Street, Tempe, Arizona, pursuant to A.R.S. Section 38-431.02, notice having been duly given.

### GOVERNING BOARD

- Dana Saar, President
- Randolph Lumm, Secretary
- Doyle Burke, Member (via phone)
- Alfredo Gutierrez, Member
- Debra Pearson, Member (via phone)

### ADMINISTRATION

Rufus Gasper  
Chris Bustamante

### CALL TO ORDER

The Special Session was called to order at 10:31 a.m. Board President Dana Saar explained the meeting was to take action on an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) between the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) and MCCCDC. He then turned the discussion over to Chancellor Rufus Gasper. Dr. Gasper remarked the IGA was created to standardize the authorization for online courses. He was on a national committee last year looking at reciprocity agreements. The committee settled on an approach of using the regional compacts to help facilitate the process. Arizona is a member of the WHICE compact. Dr. Gasper noted that Dr. Chris Bustamante, President of Rio Salado College, worked on a team to draft a proposal and coordinate activities. He asked Dr. Bustamante for an overview. Dr. Bustamante said the IGA was the result of a national Distance Learning Commission which Dr. Gasper was involved with.

Reciprocity agreements among member states established comparable standards for interstate offerings of postsecondary distance education. They allowed higher education institutions from all sectors that are U.S. Secretary of Education accredited to (voluntarily) bypass state-by-state licensing of their distance education programs via reciprocity agreement with other participating states. It will be overseen by the SARA National Council (NC-SARA) and the four regional education compacts: NEBHE, SREB, MHEC, and WICHE. Maricopa will belong to WICHE-SARA, whose members are western states, including Arizona. Currently, an institution must be registered in each state in which a student resides in order to offer classes—Rio Salado has 47 agreements with other states in place. With the acceptance of SARA, state-by-state agreements will no longer be necessary for SARA participating states.

To-date, there are nine approved SARA states: Alaska, Colorado, Idaho, Indiana, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, North Dakota, and Washington. Louisiana and Virginia recently submitted an application to their regional compact. By the end of the year it is anticipated that 20 states will be participating and by the end of following year, it is anticipated that 40 states will be participating.

Ms. Dawn Wallace, Director of State and Local Government Relations, took up the narrative to explain what happened in the State Legislature regarding this issue. Maricopa, in partnership with other public and private higher education institutions, worked to support HB2577 which passed unanimously in April 2014. The bill allowed the State to enter into reciprocity agreements for the purposes of distance education. It authorized the creation of a portal agency through intergovernmental agreement to act as liaison to WICHE-SARA and will designate representatives from private and public universities, community colleges, and a tribal college to oversee the portal agency. Once the IGA was authorized in legislation, the team created an AZ-SARA IGA Team which has been meeting since January 2014. It included representatives from the Arizona Board of Regents (ABOR), public universities, the State Board for Private Postsecondary Education (AZPPSE), private universities, and Arizona community colleges. The team was led by Dr. Chris Bustamante, who was appointed by the Arizona Community College Coordinating Council (ACCCC) to act as lead for all Arizona Community College Districts. He helped lead efforts to getting the operational agreements

established. Ms. Wallace turned discussion over to Ms. Lanna Dueck, Associate Dean at Rio Salado College. Ms. Dueck described the state application process. The AZ-SARA IGA Work Team: created the AZ-SARA Council through IGA and Operational Agreement; created Non-Instructional Complaint Policy; applied to WICHE-SARA [due on October 15, 2014]; anticipate the AZ-SARA Council will be operational in Spring 2015. Institutions may start applying in Spring and more details will be announced closer to that time. Annual fees to participate will be based on Enrolled FTE: under 2,500, \$2,000; 2,500-9,999, \$4,000; and 10,000 plus, \$6,000. Members will also pay an AZ-SARA Council fee that has yet to be determined.

The IGA was created because it was necessary to create a portal agency to liaison with WICHE-SARA. The portal agency must be governmental agency. Since no governmental agency exists in Arizona regulating all three higher education sectors, the IGA construct was used to create a portal (government) agency (the AZ-SARA Council). All three sectors will jointly constitute the AZ-SARA Council (three representatives from each, with one tribal college), for a total of 10 representatives. The community college representatives will be from the Maricopa Community Colleges, Pima Community College, and Arizona Central College. The IGA helps facilitate the operational requirements of the portal agency and will review and approve Arizona institution participation in AZ-SARA and oversee the non-instructional complaint process. The non-instructional complaint process was necessary to ensure consumer protection which was one of the main tenets of SARA. The non-instructional complaint process will be overseen by the AZ-SARA Council which will review complaints for procedural accuracy and to ensure SARA policies and standards are adhered to. It will provide final oversight of non-instructional complaints. The AZ-SARA Council has authority to: uphold institutional decisions, recommend specific corrective actions; and withdraw institutional participation in SARA for non-compliance. This allows for one more level of oversight which out-of-state students can work with if they have a non-instructional concern.

The benefits of SARA include: it's a national solution to a national higher education problem; it uses the existing structures of the regional compacts to provide oversight; it provides significant cost savings for the community colleges while providing opportunity for growth; and it provides for standardized consumer protection for the student.

The Board discussed more aspects of the agreement. The Chancellor was advised to plan for a much larger marketing budget than ever before and make strong consideration of specialty areas to attract. President Saar then called for a motion.

**1.0 INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE STATE AUTHORIZATION RECIPROCITY AGREEMENT (SARA) AND THE MCCCCD**—approve an Intergovernmental Agreement between ABOR, AZPPSE and MCCCCD representing ACCC. MCCCCD successfully (and unanimously) secured legislation authorizing the State of Arizona to participate in SARA reciprocity agreements with other states to avoid individual licensure in states where it does not have physical presence but it does educate students (e.g., online / distance learning.)

**MOTION**

**Motion 10232**

Board Member Burke moved for approval of the Item 1.0. Board Member Gutierrez seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The Special Session adjourned at 11:13 a.m.