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July 2020 State Authorization Updates & Information [1]

July 14, 2020 by erika.swain@cu.edu [2]

Good afternoon!

I know we're all incredibly busy, not only with our typical summer workloads but also with preparing our campuses for what is undoubtedly the most unusual fall semester I have ever seen.

With "location" policies (hopefully) in place, the start of our COVID-enhanced fall semester will be busy as we ensure that our data collection and required notification activities are correctly deployed. If you're still looking for information or need assistance in these areas, please don't hesitate to reach out. As a reminder, failure to comply with these regulations puts your university at risk of losing access to Title IV (federal financial aid).

I'll be offering a training session for the admissions staff on the Boulder campus about professional licensure programs and our notification obligations regarding prospective students in a few weeks. Once I have the date and the link, I'll pass it along in case you're interested in joining. We will also be recording it for later access by other groups of admissions staff.

This fall puts those of us working in state authorization in a unique position. While I know each of our universities is defining and redefining the various modalities, at the end of the day, there are really only a few recognized by the Department of Education and our accreditor: distance and correspondence. With the possibility of the Department of Education issuing a revised definition at any time, now might be a good opportunity to review each of these modalities and how they could impact next year's reporting to IPEDS and NC-SARA. Additionally, given the significant amount of distance education this year, it's a good time to review and update any web statements or websites regarding your university's participation in SARA and how students can submit complaints. Make sure this information is easy to find, and consider reminding those who send out required annual notifications to students. Letting students know you've got their back and that you're authorized to offer their courses and programs where they're located may be a small gesture, but it's one that some will appreciate.

While most of us focus on state authorization, I'm sure many of you, like me, have been pulled into discussions and planning related to the recent news from the Department of Homeland Security/ICE regarding students here on F-1 and M-1 visas [3] and their ability to remain in the U.S. if they're only taking online courses this fall. Although several amicus briefs have been filed since Harvard and MIT initiated the lawsuit, I fear this is far from over. For those of us in state authorization, it's important to have your policy on student location ready and to be prepared to assist legal teams, should they need help, in looking into authorization for offering programs and courses online in other countries. While this may not fall directly under our responsibility, authorization in many foreign countries is similar to how state authorization

worked in the U.S. prior to NC-SARA, so our skills and knowledge could prove invaluable. Additionally, keep in mind that some programs cannot be offered in certain countries due to federal embargoes, particularly in STEM fields. Boulder has a good overview of this. [4] Again, this may not be your primary concern, but it's worth mentioning as it's tangentially related.

On a lighter note, I'll be sending out information to state authorization colleagues across Colorado and the Rocky Mountain Region about joining us (virtually) on August 5th for the COLTT conference, where we'll have sessions related to state authorization and how we can better assist one another by sharing information among the various colleges and universities. I'm excited that Lori Williams, President of NC-SARA, will be joining us for a conversation about what they've been working on and some of the new directions they're exploring. We'll also have a networking opportunity with other state authorization professionals from across the region. Attendance for the RM-SAS portion of the COLTT conference will be free, and if you want to attend the entire conference, there will be a small fee for access to all sessions and opportunities. More information on this will be coming out shortly.

I hope you're all doing well and that you've had an enjoyable summer so far! As always, if I can be of any assistance or if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out.

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