



State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
Council on Postsecondary Education
OFFICE OF THE POSTSECONDARY COMMISSIONER
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Enclosure 8e
February 24, 2016

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TO: Members of the Council on Postsecondary Education

FROM: Jim Purcell, Ed.D, Commissioner for Postsecondary Education

DATE: February 16, 2016 

RE: Approval of Non-SARA fee schedule (out of state institutions)

BACKGROUND:

NC-SARA designed the state portal process to make the authorization, monitoring and consumer protection aspects of institutions that provide distance learning as efficient and substantive as possible. However, some states are not a part of NC-SARA and some institutions do not wish to seek their in-portal approval yet wish to seek authorization to offer distance learning programs state by state. As a result of Rhode Island becoming a portal state, the necessity for the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner to monitor distance learning and provide consumer protection activities is crucial to the success of the RI-SARA program. As part of our responsible efforts we must do everything we can to insure that the RI-SARA program is self-sustaining which the initiation of an appropriate non-SARA institution fee structure will provide.

OPC has RI-SARA expenses for non-SARA institutions similar to those for our RI-SARA approval processes in the following areas:

- Web site documents and ongoing support;
- Associate staff support;
- Student complaint and monitoring procedure;
- Fielding questions and providing responses to Non-SARA institutions; and
- Overall burden rate for service (administrative cost).

These are the items which I believe contribute to the need for the OPC to charge appropriate fees to non-SARA institutions seeking authorization.

Finally, the OPC must charge non-SARA institutions (outside Rhode Island not authorized by their SARA portal or from a non-SARA authorized state) who wish to provide distance learning programs to students within this state in order to protect the integrity of our in-state institutions, contribute as a partner with the other SARA affiliates and sustain the viability of the RI-SARA program.

According I recommend

THAT the Council on Postsecondary Education approves the following fee structure for institutions that are not part of NC-SARA and apply for authorization for the purpose of providing online distance learning to Rhode Island residents:

Rhode Island - Out of State - Non-SARA Annual Authorization Fees for Distance Learning Programs

- \$3,500.00 -- Enrolled FTE - under 2,500
- \$6,000.00 -- Enrolled FTE - 2,500 - 9,999
- \$8,500.00 -- Enrolled FTE - 10,000 or more