



State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
Council on Postsecondary Education
OFFICE OF THE POSTSECONDARY COMMISSIONER
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Enclosure 8c
April 14, 2016

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TO: Members of the Council on Postsecondary Education

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

DATE: April 4, 2016 

RE: Rhode Island – State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement –
Non-SARA Fees for out-of-state, non-profit institutions

Background

NC-SARA designed the state portal process to make the authorization, monitoring and consumer protection aspects of institutions which provide distance learning as efficient and substantive as possible. However, some states are not a part of NC-SARA, and some institutions do not seek approval through their in-state portal process. Some of these institutions still wish to seek authorization state-by-state. Since Rhode Island has become a portal state, it is clear that the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner has a need and responsibility to monitor distance learning within Rhode Island and to provide consumer protection advocacy. These functions represent crucial elements vital to the success of the RI-SARA program.

Rationale

The RI-SARA program is designed to be self-sustaining financially. The initiation of an appropriate non-SARA, non-profit institutional fee structure allows the OPC to maintain the RI-SARA program.

OPC has RI-SARA expenses for out-of-state, non-SARA, non-profit institutions that are similar to those for our RI-SARA approval processes in the following areas:

- Website documents and ongoing support
- Associate staff support
- Student complaint and monitoring procedure
- Fielding questions and providing responses to non-SARA, non-profit institutions
- Fielding inquiries from ineligible out-of-state institutions, such as for-profit or unaccredited institutions
- 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 out-of-state, non-SARA, non-profit institutions seeking authorization to provide online distance learning to Rhode Island students.

Finally, the OPC must charge non-SARA institutions (non-profit institutions outside Rhode Island not authorized by their SARA portal or from a NON-SARA authorized 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.

MOTION:

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

Rhode Island – Out of State - Non-SARA non-profit Annual Authorization Fees

- \$ 5,000.00 -- Enrolled FTE - under 2,500
- \$ 7,500.00 -- Enrolled FTE - 2,500 - 9,999
- \$10,000.00 -- Enrolled FTE - 10,000 or more