

News Release Midwestern Higher Education Compact



Iowa is eighth state approved for participation in the Midwestern-State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement

Chicago - On Monday, Iowa was approved by the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC) as the eighth state to join the Midwestern State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (M-SARA) during the biannual business meeting of MHEC's Executive Committee. Iowa joins Indiana, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, and Ohio. Nationally, Iowa is the 24th state to join the agreement.

SARA is a nationwide initiative of states that will make distance education courses more accessible to students across state lines and make it easier for states to regulate and institutions to participate in interstate distance education. The effort is funded by a \$3 million grant from Lumina Foundation, a \$200,000 grant from Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and fees paid by institutions.

"Increasingly, more jobs in Iowa and across the nation require additional education beyond high school," said Karen Misjak, executive director of the Iowa College Student Aid Commission. "Now, those seeking ways to develop new skills and ultimately earn higher wages will have access to more quality online programs through high-performing institutions of higher education."

The Iowa College Student Aid Commission will serve as the state "portal" agency for SARA. Known as Iowa College Aid, it was created in 1963 by the Iowa General Assembly, and is a state agency dedicated to making the path to education and training beyond high school easier for Iowans. Iowa College Aid provides college access, financial literacy, and outreach services to Iowa's students and families as they prepare, plan and pay for college. Iowa College Aid also administers state scholarship, grant, work study, and loan forgiveness programs totaling over \$70.0 million annually, conducts research, and distributes higher education data.

Representatives from Iowa College Aid anticipate that it may be ready to accept institutional participation applications by the end of the year. Additional information about SARA will be available on the Iowa College Aid website at www.IowaCollegeAid.gov and through direct communications to Iowa schools.

"We recognize the Iowa leaders and their effort to pass the SARA legislation," said Larry Isaak, MHEC president. "This voluntary effort by states to join SARA improves student access to educational opportunities in other states and will save institutions hundreds of thousands of dollars in regulatory fees."

About NC-SARA, MHEC, NEBHE, SREB, WICHE and Lumina Foundation

The National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA) is a voluntary, regional approach to state oversight of postsecondary distance education. The initiative is administered by the country's four regional higher education compacts (MHEC, NEBHE, SREB and WICHE) and overseen by NC-SARA. States and institutions that choose to participate agree to operate under common standards and procedures, providing a more uniform and less costly regulatory environment for institutions, more focused oversight responsibilities for states and better resolution of student complaints.

www.nc-sara.org

The Midwestern Higher Education Compact is a nonprofit regional organization assisting Midwestern states in advancing higher education through interstate cooperation and resource sharing. MHEC seeks to fulfill its interstate mission through programs that expand postsecondary opportunity and success; promote innovative approaches to improving institutional and system productivity; improve affordability to students and states; and enhance connectivity between higher education and the workplace. Member states are: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

www.mhec.org

The New England Board of Higher Education promotes greater educational opportunities and services for the residents of New England. It works across the six New England states to engage and assist leaders in the assessment, development, and implementation of sound education practices and policies of regional significance; promote policies, programs, and best practices to assist the states in implementing important regional higher education policies; promote regional cooperation and programs that encourage the efficient use and sharing of educational resources; and provide leadership to strengthen the relationship between higher education and the economic well-being of New England.

www.nebhe.org

The Southern Regional Education Board works with 16 member states to improve public education at every level, from pre-K through Ph.D. SREB is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization headquartered in Atlanta. SREB states currently participate in SREB's Electronic Campus Regional Reciprocity Agreement, and SREB is working closely with SARA to expand reciprocity nationwide. Member states are Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia.

www.sreb.org

The Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education and its 16 members work collaboratively to expand educational access and excellence for all citizens of the West. By promoting innovation, cooperation, resource sharing, and sound public policy among states and institutions, WICHE strengthens higher education's contributions to the region's social, economic, and civic life. WICHE's members include: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawai'i, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, Wyoming, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (the first of the U.S. Pacific territories and freely associated states to participate).

www.wiche.edu

Lumina Foundation is an independent, private foundation committed to increasing the proportion of Americans with high-quality degrees, certificates and other credentials to 60 percent by 2025. Lumina's outcomes-based approach focuses on helping to design and build an accessible, responsive and accountable higher education system while fostering a national sense of urgency for action to achieve Goal 2025.

www.luminafoundation.org