



# DLAB

Distance Learning Authorization Board

January 18, 2019

The Honorable Tony Evers  
Governor of Wisconsin  
115 East State Capitol  
Madison, WI 53702

Dear Governor Evers:

On behalf of the Wisconsin Distance Learning Authorization Board (DLAB), I am pleased to provide you with the attached report summarizing the Board's 2018 activities. The report was approved by DLAB at its December 14, 2018, meeting for submission to you and the chief clerk of each house of the legislature for distribution to the legislature as required by s. 39.87(3), *Wis. Stats.*

If you have any questions about the report, please contact me at (608) 204-5222.

Sincerely,

Rolf Wegenke, Ph.D.

Chair, Wisconsin Distance Learning Authorization Board

President, Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities

cc: DLAB members:

Dr. Ray Cross, President, UW System and DLAB Vice Chair

Dr. Morna Foy, President, Wisconsin Technical College System and DLAB Secretary

Dr. Dawn Crim, Secretary, Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services



# DLAB

Distance Learning Authorization Board

## Report of 2018 Activities

The Wisconsin Distance Learning Authorization Board (DLAB) was established by 2015 Wisconsin Act 208, on March 1, 2016. The Board is attached to the Wisconsin Higher Educational Aids Board (HEAB) for administrative purposes, and HEAB hosts a DLAB-related webpage on its website. The DLAB website is available at <http://www.heab.state.wi.us/dlab/index.html>. The DLAB serves as Wisconsin's portal entity, allowing Wisconsin institutions of higher education, who serve out-of-state students through distance education, to participate in the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement, or SARA. The DLAB has membership from each higher education sector including the University of Wisconsin System (UWS), the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS), the Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (WAICU) for private, nonprofit institutions, Wisconsin's Tribal Colleges, and the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services for proprietary institutions. The Tribal College representative is currently vacant and self-nominations from the Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Community College and College of Menominee Nation have been sent to the Governor for consideration to fill this position.

As required by s. 39.87(3), *Wis. Stats*, annually by January 30, the DLAB shall submit a report "that summarizes the board's actions taken during the immediately preceding calendar year." This report was approved by the DLAB at its December 14, 2018, meeting for submission under s. 39.87.

### 2018 Meetings

The Board met three times in 2018, with meetings in May, October and December. The primary business of the May meeting was to review and approve the State of Wisconsin's renewal application for participation in SARA. Participating states are required to renew every two years. Wisconsin's application for renewal was approved by the DLAB at its May meeting and was subsequently approved unanimously by the Midwest State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (MSARA) Regional Steering Committee at their July 2018 meeting. Approval of new institutional applications for participation in SARA or renewal of institutional applications were also taken up at all three meetings of the DLAB in 2018. The Board also made a minor revision to its operating agreement (discussed below in this report) and elected Board officers for 2019. Officers for 2019 elected at the December 14, 2018 meeting are as follows:

- Chair: Dr. Rolf Wegenke, President, Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities
- Vice Chair: Dr. Ray Cross, President, University of Wisconsin System

- Secretary: Dr. Morna Foy, President, Wisconsin Technical College System

**Modification of the DLAB Operating Agreement**

At the May 2018 meeting, the DLAB approved a modification to the DLAB operating agreement to clarify the process under which an institution may receive provisional approval to participate in SARA, such as when and if there is a pending change in an institution’s accreditation or financial status. Consistent with policy and standards established by the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA), if provisional status is approved, the institution will be subject to additional oversight measures to ensure that SARA requirements are met.

**Institutional Application Approvals, Renewals and Enrollment**

As of December 2018, 48 Wisconsin-based higher education institutions have been approved by the DLAB to participate in SARA. This includes 13 UWS campuses, 15 WTCS institutions, 19 private, nonprofit institutions, and one proprietary institution. In response to the UWS’s restructuring of the UW-Colleges into the authority of 7 receiving UWS institutions, the UW-Colleges ceased being an accredited institution for purposes of SARA participation as of July 1, 2018. In response, UW-Colleges rescinded its request to continue to participate in SARA and such request was approved by the DLAB and the NC-SARA.

All Wisconsin-based institutions approved by the DLAB to participate in SARA are required to comply with SARA enrollment and complaint reporting. To date, all institutions are in compliance with these provisions. No complaints were filed against any Wisconsin-based SARA-participating institutions in 2018.

As required by s. 39.86(3)(a)2., *Wis. Stats*, the following chart lists all the DLAB-approved SARA institutions. The list of approved institutions is also available on the NC-SARA website, and a link to this site is included on the DLAB website.

**Wisconsin-Based Participating SARA Institutions**

**UWS:**

University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire	University of Wisconsin – Platteville
University of Wisconsin – Green Bay	University of Wisconsin – River Falls
University of Wisconsin – La Crosse	University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point
University of Wisconsin – Madison	University of Wisconsin – Stout
University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee	University of Wisconsin – Superior
University of Wisconsin – Oshkosh	University of Wisconsin – Whitewater
University of Wisconsin – Parkside	

**WAICU – Private, Non-Profit:**

Alverno College	Marian University
Bellin College	Marquette University
Cardinal Stritch University	Medical College of Wisconsin
Carroll University	Milwaukee School of Engineering
Carthage College	Mount Mary University
Concordia University Wisconsin	Nashotah House
Edgewood College	Silver Lake College of the Holy Family
Herzing University	Viterbo University
Lakeland University	Wisconsin Lutheran College
Maranatha Baptist University (not WAICU member)	

**WTCS:**

Blackhawk Technical College	Nicolet Area Technical College
Chippewa Valley Technical College	Northcentral Technical College
Fox Valley Technical College	Northeast Wisconsin Technical College
Gateway Technical College	Southwest Wisconsin Technical College
Lakeshore Technical College	Waukesha County Technical College
Madison Area Technical College	Western Technical College
Mid-State Technical College	Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College
Moraine Park Technical College	

**Proprietary Institutions:**

Wright Graduate University for the Realization of Human Potential	
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**Enrollment**

NC-SARA requires SARA-participating institutions to annually report distance education program enrollments of out-of-state students. Based on 2017-18 enrollment reporting, 6,570 out-of-state students representing all 48 SARA states (other than Wisconsin) enrolled in distance education programs at Wisconsin-based SARA-participating institutions. Only California has yet to join SARA.

At the same time, other states reported 17,131 Wisconsin residents were enrolled in a distance education program at an out-of-state SARA-participating institution. Wisconsin students attended SARA-participating institutions in all 48 of the other SARA-participating states. The table below shows the top five home states of students attending Wisconsin-based SARA-participating institutions and the top five states where Wisconsin students attended SARA-participating institutions in 2017-18.

Home State	Out-of-State Students Attending Wisconsin Institutions Under SARA	State of Attendance	Wisconsin Students Attending Out-of-State Institutions Under SARA
Minnesota	1,097	Minnesota	2,554
Illinois	958	Arizona	2,919
Michigan	538	Utah	1,221
Texas	363	New Hampshire	979
Georgia	272	Colorado	882

Among Wisconsin-based SARA-participating institutions, the largest number of out-of-state distance education students are enrolled in online programs at Herzing University (1,408 students), Concordia University Wisconsin (493 students), University of Wisconsin-Stout (482 students), University of Wisconsin-Platteville (458 students), and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (446 students).

In 2017, Wisconsin-based institutions participating in SARA were asked for feedback about their experiences in SARA, including whether SARA participation has increased their distance education enrollment. Those responding to the survey believed SARA participation had simplified their ability to use distance education to serve students. Their support for SARA is evidenced by the high renewal rate in 2018 among institutions at nearly 100 percent renewal.

#### **Exempt Institutions**

Another statutory responsibility assigned to the DLAB is that the Board “create and maintain” a list of higher education institutions that are legally authorized to operate in Wisconsin. Institutions that are legally authorized in a state are exempt from additional state authorization requirements as stated in the “program integrity rules” issued as final regulations of the US Department of Education in 75 Fed. Reg. 66832 to 66975 (October 29, 2010).

The Board is required to make this list available to the public and at least annually provide the list to the Wisconsin Legislative Reference Bureau for publication in the *Wisconsin Administrative Register*. The list of exempt institutions was provided by HEAB (as the administrative agency to which the DLAB is attached) to the Reference Bureau and is to be published in the *Wisconsin Administrative Register*. A change made from the 2017 listing includes the deletion of a separate listing for UW Extension and UW Colleges, given the merger with the four-year UWS institutions. The listing of exempt institutions is available on the DLAB website.

### **2019 Anticipated Activities**

For 2019, the DLAB priorities include:

- Reviewing institutional renewal applications and any new applications.
- Continuing to provide input on NC-SARA policies, procedures and data requirements.
- Continuing strong cross-sector collaboration that makes the DLAB unique in how states are complying with SARA requirements.
- Continuing as a technical resource for Wisconsin-based higher education institutions participating in SARA or seeking to participate.

In conclusion, the DLAB continues to serve an important role in facilitating the ability of Wisconsin-based higher education institutions to expand their distance education offerings and enrollment and ensure high quality distance education opportunities for Wisconsin.