THE STATE *of* **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education

INSTITUTIONAL AUTHORIZATION

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Addendum to Institutional Participation in SARA

An Alaska institution seeking approval to participate in the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA), through the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, must submit this completed form to the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education (ACPE), Alaska's portal agency for SARA.

Institutions approved by ACPE for participation in SARA additionally agree to:

Institution's Affirmation:

Provide, upon request, information necessary to evaluate if the institution, its courses, or programs offered under SARA, meet the C-RAC norms (see Appendix), or other SARA requirements.

Copy ACPE on communications to the National Council for SARA, or NC-SARA, including annual data reporting information.

Agree to abide by the applicable regulations under 20 AAC 17.016.

Immediately notify ACPE if the institution's U.S. Department of Education financial responsibility index score falls below 1.5.

I, the undersigned representative of (Institution Name) _____ , having the authority to commit the institution to operate under the SARA interstate agreement, hereby certify that this institution understands the terms and conditions outlined in this addendum. I also certify this institution understands that failure to abide by SARA terms and standards may result in loss of participation.

Signature: _____   Date Signed: _____

Appendix

Interregional Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education 2011

Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (C-RAC)

1. Online learning is appropriate to the institution's missions and purposes.

   Analysis/Evidence: ****

- \ The mission statement explains the role of online learning within the range of the institution's programs and services;
- \ Institutional and program statements of vision and values inform how the online learning environment is created and supported;
- \ As appropriate, the institution incorporates into its online learning programs methods of meeting the stated institutional goals for the student experience at the institution;
- \ The recruitment and admissions programs supporting the online learning courses and programs appropriately target the student populations to be served;
- \ The students enrolled in the institution's online learning courses and programs fit the admissions requirements for the students the institution intends to serve;
- \ Senior administrators and staff can articulate how online learning is consonant with the institution's mission and goals.

2. The institution's plans for developing, sustaining, and, if appropriate, expanding online learning offerings are integrated into its regular planning and evaluation processes.

   Analysis/Evidence:

- \ Development and ownership of plans for online learning extend beyond the administrators directly responsible for it and the programs directly using it;
- \ Planning documents are explicit about any goals to increase numbers of programs provided through online learning courses and programs and/or number of students to be enrolled in them;
- \ Plans for online learning are linked effectively to budget and technology planning to ensure adequate support for current and future offerings;
- \ Plans for expanding online learning demonstrate the institution's capacity to assure an appropriate level of quality;
- \ The institution and its online learning programs have a track record of conducting needs analysis and of supporting programs.

3. Online learning is incorporated into the institution's systems of governance and academic oversight.

   Analysis/Evidence:

- \ The institution's faculty have a designated role in the design and implementation of its online learning offerings;
- \ The institution ensures the rigor of the offerings and the quality of the instruction;
- \ Approval of online courses and programs follows standard processes used in the college or university;
- \ Online learning courses and programs are evaluated on a periodic basis;
- \ Contractual relationships and arrangements with consortial partners, if any, are clear and guarantee that the institution can exercise appropriate responsibility for the academic quality of all online learning offerings provided under its name.

****These bulleted points illustrate actions, processes, and facts that institutions may use to demonstrate that they meet SARA requirements.

4. Curricula for the institution's online learning offerings are coherent, cohesive, and comparable in academic rigor to programs offered in traditional instructional formats.

Analysis/Evidence:

\ The curricular goals and course objectives show that the institution or program has knowledge of the best uses of online learning in different disciplines and settings;

\ Curricula delivered through online learning are benchmarked against on-ground courses and programs, if provided by the institution, or those provided by traditional institutions;

\ The curriculum is coherent in its content and sequencing of courses and is effectively defined in easily available documents including course syllabi and program descriptions;

\ Scheduling of online learning courses and programs provides students with a dependable pathway to ensure timely completion of degrees;

\ The institution or program has established and enforces a policy on online learning course enrollments to ensure faculty capacity to work appropriately with students;

\ Expectations for any required face-to-face, on ground work (e.g.,internships, specialized laboratory work) are stated clearly;

\ Course design and delivery supports student-student and faculty-student interaction;

\ Curriculum design and the course management system enable active faculty contribution to the learning environment;

\ Course and program structures provide schedule and support known to be effective in helping online learning students persist and succeed.

5. The institution evaluates the effectiveness of its online learning offerings, including the extent to which the online learning goals are achieved, and uses the results of its evaluations to enhance the attainment of goals.

Analysis/Evidence:

\ Assessment of student learning follows processes used in onsite courses or programs and/or reflects good practice in assessment methods;

\ Student course evaluations are routinely taken and an analysis of them contributes to strategies for course improvements;

\ Evaluation strategies ensure effective communication between faculty members who design curriculum, faculty members who interact with students, and faculty members who evaluate student learning;

\ The institution regularly evaluates the effectiveness of the academic and support services provided to students in online courses and uses the results for improvement;

\ The institution demonstrates the appropriate use of technology to support its assessment strategies;

\ The institution documents its successes in implementing changes informed by its programs of assessment and evaluation;

\ The institution provides examples of student work and student interactions among themselves and with faculty;

\ The institution sets appropriate goals for the retention/persistence of students using online learning, assesses its achievement of these goals, and uses the results for improvement.

6. Faculty responsible for delivering the online learning curricula and evaluating student success in achieving the online learning goals are appropriately qualified and effectively supported.

Analysis/Evidence:

\ Online learning faculties are carefully selected, appropriately trained, frequently evaluated, and are marked by an acceptable level of turnover;

\ The institution's training program for online learning faculty is periodic, incorporates tested good practices in online learning pedagogy, and ensures competency with the range of software products used by the institution;

\ Faculty are proficient and effectively supported in using the course management system;

\ The office or persons responsible for online learning training programs are clearly identified and have the competencies to accomplish the tasks, including knowledge of the specialized resources and technical support available to support course development and delivery;

\ Faculty members engaged in online learning share in the mission and goals of the institution and its programs and are provided the opportunities to contribute to the broader activities of the institution;

\ Students express satisfaction with the quality of the instruction provided by online learning faculty members.

7. The institution provides effective student and academic services to support students enrolled in online learning offerings.

Analysis/Evidence:

\ The institution's admissions program for online learning provides good web-based information to students about the nature of the online learning environment, and assists them in determining if they possess the skills important to success in online learning;

\ The institution provides an online learning orientation program;

\ The institution provides support services to students in formats appropriate to the delivery of the online learning program;

\ Students in online learning programs have adequate access to student services, including financial aid, course registration, and career

and placement counseling;

- \ Students in online learning programs have ready access to 24/7 tech support;
- \ Students using online learning have adequate access to learning resources, including library, information resources, laboratories, and equipment and tracking systems;
- \ Students using online learning demonstrate proficiency in the use of electronic forms of learning resources;
- \ Student complaint processes are clearly defined and can be used electronically;
- \ Publications and advertising for online learning programs are accurate and contain necessary information such as program goals, requirements, academic calendar, and faculty;
- \ Students are provided with reasonable and cost-effective ways to participate in the institution's system of student authentication.

8. The institution provides sufficient resources to support and, if appropriate, expand its online learning offerings.

Analysis/Evidence:

- \ The institution prepares a multi-year budget for online learning that includes resources for assessment of program demand, marketing, appropriate levels of faculty and staff, faculty and staff development, library and information resources, and technology infrastructure;
- \ The institution provides evidence of a multi-year technology plan that addresses its goals for online learning and includes provision for a robust and scalable technical infrastructure.

9. The institution assures the integrity of its online offerings.

Analysis/Evidence:

- \ The institution has in place effective procedures through which to ensure that the student who registers in a distance education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives the academic credit. The institution makes clear in writing that these processes protect student privacy and notifies students at the time of registration or enrollment of any projected additional costs associated with the verification procedures. (Note: This is a federal requirement. All institutions that offer distance education programs must demonstrate compliance with this requirement.);
- \ The institution's policies on academic integrity include explicit references to online learning;
- \ Issues of academic integrity are discussed during the orientation for online students;
- \ Training for faculty members engaged in online learning includes consideration of issues of academic integrity, including ways to reduce cheating.