



DLAB

Distance Learning Authorization Board

May 15, 2026 DLAB Meeting Minutes

Members present

Dr. Eric Fulcomer, Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (WAICU)

Layla Merrifield, Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS)

Chris Patton, Universities of Wisconsin (UW)

Members absent

Karen Breit, Wisconsin Tribal Colleges

Secretary Dan Hereth, Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS)

Others present

Tammie DeVooght-Blaney, HEAB

Rebecca Larson, WAICU

Paige Smith, UW

Julie Drake, WTCS

Megan Stritchko, WTCS

Call to Order, Roll Call, and Open Meeting Statement – Layla Merrifield, DLAB Chair

Layla Merrifield, DLAB Chair, called the meeting to order at 11:01 am. Julie Drake read the open meeting statement and roll call indicated that a quorum was present.

Action: Approval of December 12, 2025 DLAB Meeting Minutes – Layla Merrifield

The minutes of the December 12, 2025, meeting were approved unanimously (Fulcomer/Patton motion). The minutes will be posted on the DLAB website.

Report of the Chair – Layla Merrifield

Layla Merrifield welcomed the board and reviewed the agenda.

Report: Review and Approval of Institutional Applications & Renewals

Universities of Wisconsin – Paige Smith

Paige Smith reported having no new renewals to report.

Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities – Rebecca Larson

Rebecca Larson reported having no new renewals to report.

Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services – Megan Stritchko

On behalf of DSPS, Megan Stritchko reported no new renewals to report.



DLAB

Distance Learning Authorization Board

Wisconsin Technical College System – Megan Stritchko

Megan Stritchko reported having approved three renewal applications for Blackhawk Technical College, Gateway Technical College, and Milwaukee Area Technical College.

Action: Review and Approval of State of Wisconsin Renewal Application for NC-SARA Membership – Megan Stritchko

Wisconsin renews its state application every two years. The current application is due May 25 and will be submitted to M-SARA, and by the Regional Steering Committee, where Paige serves as a committee member. A vote is scheduled for August 5. The full application packet is extensive and includes several attachments. The application remains consistent with prior submissions, with only minor updates. A draft cover letter was provided, and a form requiring completion by the Board Chair will be included. No edits or changes were suggested.

The Review and Approval of State of Wisconsin Renewal Application for NC-SARA Membership was approved unanimously (Fulcomer/Patton). The application will be submitted.

Report: Staff Updates

NC-SARA Policy Modification Process – Paige Smith

NC-SARA is engaged in the 2026 Policy Modification Process (PMP), with more than 30 proposals submitted addressing institutional participation, consumer protection, complaint processes and disclosure requirements. The proposals reflect continued interest from regional compacts and external organizations in strengthening accountability, increasing transparency in SARA operations and expanding state authority over out-of-state institutions.

These efforts build on policy changes adopted in 2025, including enhanced institutional complaint data reporting by type and student location, expanded state authority to impose and publicly disclose provisional status, and new requirements for institutions to share teach-out plans with state portal entities concurrent with submission to accreditors.

NC-SARA also plans to expand data reporting requirements beginning with the 2027 reporting cycle, which is expected to increase institutional reporting obligations. At the federal level, regulations related to state authorization and distance education continue to evolve, with an overall trend toward increased reporting and alignment among federal, state and accrediting bodies. Ongoing negotiated rulemaking related to accreditation, accountability and workforce-focused programs signals sustained federal engagement in oversight alignment.

Collectively, these developments will require SARA-participating institutions to strengthen compliance efforts related to data reporting, accreditation standards and state oversight focused on student consumer protection. DLAB staff will continue to advocate for the best interests of Wisconsin students through committee service, policy review and stakeholder feedback, while supporting the preservation of SARA's original mission and intent.



DLAB

Distance Learning Authorization Board

NASASPS Update – Rebecca Larson

The National Association of State Administrators and Supervisors of Private Schools (NASASPS) Annual Conference took place April 19-22 in Dallas, Texas where discussions centered on regulatory developments and upcoming rulemakings tied to the reconciliation process. Workforce Pell was a major focus area, including clarification that NC-SARA does not currently cover Workforce Pell programs. Megan Stritchko has been actively coordinating with the Department of Workforce Development (DWD), with program implementation anticipated to begin July 1. Emphasis was placed on the importance of institutional retention and continuity planning, particularly in response to catastrophic events.

Complaints Report – Megan Stritchko

On behalf of DSPS, Megan Stritchko reported no complaints for this quarter.

Adjournment

The meeting concluded without any additional discussion, and a motion to adjourn was proposed (Fulcomer/Patton). The motion was unanimously approved, and the meeting officially adjourned at 11:16 a.m.