Cheryl Dowd (00:00):

Welcome. I'm Cheryl Dowd, Senior Director of Policy Innovations. The Sate Authorization Network, SAN is pleased to present the 2021 sensational award winning projects. Today, we will introduce the great work of our colleagues from Franklin University. The sensational award is an annual award originally conceived in 2015 to recognize the outstanding work of SAN members to develop solutions and strategies to manage state and federal regulations for out-of-state activity compliance that serves to provide student protections. As one can understand, establishing processes and procedures to support compliance isn't a one size fits all task. Creativity and vision are important attributes for compliance staff to understand the problem, conceptualize tools or procedures to address the problem and then obtain buy-in at the institution for cross institutional collaboration to implement processes and procedures to support compliance.

Cheryl Dowd (00:58):

Awards are determined through a process that includes self nominations of projects to a review committee who evaluate and identifies the projects that should be awarded. The listing of award winners and descriptions of previous projects is provided on the SAN website. We hope you'll take a look. Thank you to our sensational review committee for their good work and support throughout this process. I'd like to now turn to my colleague Rachael Stachowiak, Director of Interstate Policy and Compliance.

Rachael Stachowiak (01:25):

Thanks so much, Cheryl. We are so excited to award Franklin University this year the 2021 sensation award in the category of compliance innovation. As Cheryl spoke to, this category calls on SAN member institutions to share their policies, tools, inventive and novel compliance management practices to help solve a tricky compliance issue. So the staff joining us today from Franklin have conceived a project which utilizes relationships on their campus to adapt a new system to comply with updates to a recent federal rule which expands notifications to all students, not just online students, seeking and enrolling in programs leading to a professional license. This federal rule 34 CFR 668.43 requires two things. First, a public notification is posted to an institution's website and that notes one of three pieces of information per program. Does the curriculum meet state requirements? Does the curriculum not meet state requirements? Or if the institution has not been able to make a determination.

Rachael Stachowiak (02:43):

Now we must remember that even before we can disclose one of those three statements, the institution must seek an applicable approval by a state board. And this is the first bullet point of my slide. The gist, we always must remember, states maintain the authority to regulate post-secondary institutions both in state and out of state pursuant to the laws and regulations which protect students as consumers, the general public and then the interests of the state. So with this in mind, institutions are not only tuning into their state higher education agency requirements but also the requirements approvals and procedures governed by a state professional board. And this is most common with professions like nursing, teaching or counseling. Part two to this federal regulation, once the institution has a sense of the applicable state board approvals and they've constructed that public disclosure, they then must drill down and reach out directly to both prospective and enrolled students where they've determined one of two of those criteria.

Rachael Stachowiak (03:51):

If the program does not meet state requirements or if the institution hasn't been able to make a determination, to support the second step in distributing these disclosures, compliance staff must think about utilizing multiple touchpoints and experts within their institutions of walls. And with that, I am so pleased to introduce Kate Grimes, the Director of Academic Compliance and Sarah Christian, Accreditation Specialist with Franklin University in Ohio. And they're here to share about their technological solution and their great work with key campus contacts who help to answer the call to comply with this challenging federal requirement, Kate and Sarah, I'll turn it to you.

Sarah Christian (04:33):

Thank you Cheryl and Rachael and welcome to our compliance innovations presentation. Today we'll be talking about one way Franklin utilizes Slate, a CRM system as a way to manage compliance for our licensure programs. My name is Sarah Christian and I'm the Accreditation Specialist at Franklin University. Presenting with me today is Kate Grimes, our Director of Academic Compliance. First, I'd like to provide a brief overview of Franklin University. Our main campus is located in downtown Columbus, Ohio. We are a private non-profit institution accredited by the higher learning commission. The majority of our academic programming is delivered online. Franklin is a medium sized institution that offers undergraduate, graduate and doctoral degrees. We have a high transfer population and primarily serve adult learners with the average age of our students being 34. At Franklin, accreditation and state authorization work is managed through a centralized office, the Office of Accreditation and Authorization which reports up through academic affairs to the provost.

Sarah Christian (05:47):

So at Franklin, we utilize a variety of technical solutions to manage compliance with state authorization. One way we use technology is to manage two issues specific to our professional licensure programs. One being direct disclosures and locations where our programs do not meet or we cannot determine if they meet the educational requirements for licensure. And the other for direct notification to current students in licensure programs who change their location to somewhere that is closed for enrollment in their program. For example in our case, the programs we have closed for enrollment in some locations happen to be all of our professional licensure programs. Our office, the Accreditation and Authorization Office had the information but we needed the means to implement an automated solution. An existing CRM campaign was in place that was designed around pre-July 1st 2020 regulations.

Sarah Christian (06:42):

When we got to the point where we needed to seriously look at setting up student outreach that met the requirements of the July 1st 2020 federal regulations, we learned two important things. First, that the university was switching to a new CRM system called Slate. And second, the original campaign was crashing the existing CRM system on a regular basis because that CRM process involved one campaign per disclosure. As a result, the university had around 680 current student variations, not including what was running to inquiries and applicants. Continuous improvement is something that our institution, especially our office always promotes. And as these pictures of past and present balls of yarn depict, we took our original clunky process and streamlined it to better serve our stakeholders involved.

Sarah Christian (07:34):

So we've talked about a CRM and CRM campaign but what are those exactly? A CRM or a customer relationship management system is a way for organizations to manage and analyze interactions with customers. A CRM campaign is designed to automatically send a communication to an individual. For our office, a campaign is emailed to a student based on their recorded academic program and reported location. Using a CRM to configure communications to students that go out automatically upon certain conditions significantly reduces the likelihood of missing someone which is much more likely to happen with processes that are primarily manual. Technolutions developed Slate specifically for higher education institutions to use as a communications tool. It is a web-based user friendly tool that is customizable. Slate treats a person as a whole record. For example, from inquiry to applicant to student. Whereas our previous CRM system required two different management groups to work on our CRM campaigns from our office. One group for current students and one for applicants. Next, Kate Grimes is going to talk about some of the things we learned while implementing this new structure in Slate.

Kate Grimes (08:49):

Thank you, Sarah. When US Department of Education regulations that went into effect July 1st 2020 were officially released, staff members from our office initially communicated about our planned notifications and disclosures through a presentation to a committee that consists of representatives from across all functional areas at the university. While we captured the big picture well with that presentation, what may prove to be helpful to others is the aha moment that came when we eventually realized we hadn't successfully communicated the difference between the closed location notifications and the professional licensure direct disclosures. Making this distinction clear was essential to enabling our CRM managers to successfully build the Slate email campaigns. Getting to that moment of understanding only happened as a result of regular engagement with other offices across the university. As the result of these many discussions, we created the workflows you see here to illustrate the triggers that prompt a communication to an applicant or student. While learning that we could couldn't just copy the original campaign structure into Slate was disheartening at first, it gave us the opportunity to examine what wasn't working.

Kate Grimes (10:04):

There were definitely some frustrating moments along the way but we were ultimately able to make critical improvements in our internal communications and in the campaign designs. Our campaigns are no longer crashing the CRM system. It is much easier to make updates when needed and the manual work required to get new campaigns up and running has been significantly reduced. The previous slide identified the when and why of communicating to applicants and students. The top two images on this slide are examples of the email communications that can be sent out through our CRM campaigns. The email message directs the recipients to contact their admissions or academic advisor for additional information or if they have questions. If they do reach out, an advisor will then contact the academic program chair and a member of our office to discuss what response is needed. In the image to the bottom of this slide, you can see how university staff members are able to view the communication outreach history in Slate.

Kate Grimes (11:05):

In this example, an applicant received a direct disclosure about nurse practitioner licensing in Georgia. The applicant reached out to their admissions advisor with a question. The admissions advisor then reach out to our office and we worked with the advisor to provide the applicant with additional information. All of the emails sent to the applicant were recorded in Slate and they can be clicked on to see exactly what was sent. Slate also records the timing of the communication, whether or not it was open, what device was used to open the message and if any links inside the message were clicked.

Kate Grimes (11:44):

Finally, we wanted to share a few tips including advice from our communication systems colleagues that may benefit others looking to implement a CRM solution for notifications or disclosures. First, it took more time initially to set up the campaigns in Slate as our colleagues worked to take advantage of dynamic content and slightly complex queries. In addition, while the automation of the communications is efficient and improves compliance in the long run. As with any project, if there are limited resources or competing priorities, that may extend the time needed for the implementation phase.

Kate Grimes (12:21):

Next, ongoing communication and collaboration between departments is critical for initial project development and is needed on a regular basis after implementation. Casting back to our yarn example, without ongoing attention you're at risk of creating another tangled mess in the future. Ongoing contact between departments ensures that the campaigns are operating correctly, sufficient time can be dedicated to adding campaigns when new programs are launched and ensuring that everyone shares an understanding of why and when these emails go out. Lastly, as we stated earlier in the presentation, we use a variety of processes to fulfill our state authorization and US Department of Education compliance obligations. The Slate CRM campaigns are an important solution to ensure that our applicants and current students get the information they need while saving our office time, increasing and creating a digital communications record.

Kate Grimes (13:20):

Sarah and I would like to thank everyone for the opportunity to share how we use as a compliance resource. We would also like to thank WCET and the Sate Authorization Network for this recognition and for all of the resources they provide for those of us working in this field. Thank you also to our state authorization colleagues who continually inspire us and support our critical thinking on these topics.

Rachael Stachowiak (13:46):

Bravo Kate and Sarah. Again on behalf of the Sate Authorization Network and the sensational work committee, congratulations to you and thank you so much for your good work in sharing with our network today. So thank you. Just a reminder to folks, you can view our award-winning sensational projects on WCET Sate Authorization Networks YouTube playlist. So you can view our other winning projects and also visit our website to see past projects at wcetsan.wiche.edu. Thanks everyone.