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Winners announced for the ninth annual SANSational Awards

The State Authorization Network (SAN), [a division of WCET](#) (WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies) is pleased to announce the recipients of the 2023 State Authorization Network SANSational awards: Post University (CT), Sinclair Community College (OH), The Chicago School (CA), and University of Louisville (KY).

Boulder, CO – The State Authorization Network (SAN) is pleased to announce the winners of the 9th annual SANSational Awards. These awards recognize transformational efforts by SAN member institutions and organizations in developing a high-quality, comprehensive solution to a challenging state authorization issue. Works recognized by the SANSational Awards present solutions that meet the needs of regulators, the institution, and students. These efforts serve as models which can be adapted or replicated by others.

The 2023 SANSational Award winners are categorized into three areas: (1) Compliance Innovations: Institution policy, tools, compliance teams, or other inventive or novel compliance management process. (2) Licensure Programs: Notifications and disclosures for professional licensure in each state; (3) Location: Identifying student location for regulatory compliance and reporting requirements.

This year's winners have been recognized in the following categories:

Compliance Innovations:

Awarded to:

- **University of Louisville (KY)**
 - Title - Elevating the Importance of Academic Compliance: A Paired Approach to Change

Licensure Programs:

Awarded to:

- **The Chicago School (CA)**
 - Title - The Licensure Story: When Obstacles & Challenges Lead to Wins
- **Post University (CT)**
 - Title - Personalized Licensure Advising and Disclosure

Location:

Awarded to:

- **The Chicago School (CA)**
 - Title - Embracing Purposeful Engagement for a California Institution

Awarded to:

- **Sinclair Community College (OH)**
 - Title - Professional Licensure Disclosures

“The SANSational Awards recognize the best of the best in all categories, outstanding efforts, innovative solutions, and spotlight real-world solutions of everyday problems as noted by members of the State Authorization Network”, said Jana Walser-Smith, Director of Interstate Compliance and SAN Member Outreach. Walser-Smith continued: “The winners of this award have made comprehensive, and often visionary contributions to the development of distance education compliance tools. I’m certain that these award winners will inspire others working in the profession to think creatively about their own approach to fortifying the compliance protocols at their own institutions”.

SAN team members will personally deliver and present the awards directly to each SANSational awardee throughout Fall 2023 and Winter 2024. Our staff will join in celebrating with each team at their respective locations. SAN will publish a [video library](#) containing recorded presentations with each winner describing their compliance challenge and winning solution by December 2023 for on demand viewing.

For more information and videos of our award winners, please visit:

<https://wcetsan.wiche.edu/resources/sansational-awards>

Additional Information on 2023 Award Winners

University of Louisville (KY)

Awarded: Compliance Innovations - Institution policy, tools, compliance teams or other inventive or novel compliance management process

Title - Elevating the Importance of Academic Compliance: A Paired Approach to Change

Located in Kentucky’s largest metropolitan area, the University of Louisville (UofL) is a public research university with 12 academic schools and colleges. UofL is proud to be recognized among the nation's best institutions for African American, LatinX, and LGBTQ+ students. We have been designated a Military Friendly school, and are a producer of top scholars, including more Fulbright Scholars since 2003 than all other Kentucky public institutions combined. Committed to ensuring access to higher education for all, including increasing the availability of financial aid for low-income and first-generation college students and providing additional support and resources for underrepresented populations, UofL is home to more than 23,000 students.

Institutional size and organizational structure often impact viable solutions to state authorization and related academic compliance challenges. In large, decentralized universities where campus units grapple with a multitude of conflicting priorities, securing buy-in can be a painfully slow process. Furthermore, certain job titles, like 'distance education compliance manager,' might inadvertently lead colleagues to assume that specific compliance concerns do not pertain to them.

This, in turn, may cause key stakeholders to question the prioritization of academic compliance, especially when they fail to observe any immediate signs of Title IV eligibility being in jeopardy

or that potential fines and sanctions could be levied against the institution. In a context like this, developing a strategic approach for elevating the importance of academic compliance can be critical for achieving desired outcomes. By identifying where the key stakeholders already were and leveraging two existing university leadership meetings to build trust and to maintain awareness of academic compliance issues, the distance education compliance manager carved out space for academic compliance awareness to spread. This compliance innovation is simple, easy to adapt for any institution, and time is the only expense.

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The Chicago School (CA)

Awarded: Licensure Programs - Notifications and disclosures for professional licensure in each state

Title: The Licensure Story: When Obstacles & Challenges Lead to Wins

The Chicago School is a non-profit public institution with a national presence, offering over thirty graduate and undergraduate programs in professional fields such as psychology, business, health services, education, counseling, and more. These programs are offered in online/distance modality as well as on-ground.

With the licensure disclosure requirements set forth by the Federal Government, the Office of Accreditation, Licensure, & State Authorization (ALSA) at The Chicago School has worked diligently to develop a process that determines and tracks where its programs' offerings lead to professional licensure eligibility. In 2019, The Chicago School established an annual licensure audit, which comprises a detailed review of each state's licensing laws and regulations published on the state's licensing board websites. ALSA thoroughly reviews the laws and regulations to identify each state's educational standards for licensure and whether the program requires individual approval from a state professional licensing board. All findings pertaining to professional licensure requirements per state are transferred to a database through which information about existing licensure regulations and changes may be tracked and archived. Once the research process is completed, the database is sent to the Program Chair to solicit appropriate feedback. As the program expert, the Chair is asked to work collaboratively with ALSA by reviewing the information provided and determining where the program's curriculum meets or does not meet licensure requirements or whether a determination has not been made. Once the review process is completed, ALSA works with the Legal Affairs office to approve all licensure disclosure changes to ensure federal/state compliance. This collaborative process has proven to be monumental in accurately tracking state licensure eligibility for our programs.

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Post University (CT)

Awarded: Licensure Programs - Notifications and disclosures for professional licensure in each state

The associates at Post University believe that personalized guidance, unwavering motivation, robust support, and a student-centered education are the catalysts that allow students to achieve their individual academic and career goals. Post University programs shape workforce-ready, socially responsible leaders through learning experiences offered in and out of the classroom designed to promote the exchange of knowledge, expand thinking, and refine practical and professional skills. Founded in 1890 and serving students online or in person from a 58-acre campus in Waterbury, Connecticut, last year's unique student headcount included over 31,000 students.

Knowing that a simple posting of whether or not an enrollment could fulfill the educational requirements for licensure in each state required by federal regulations did not fully express Post's tenet of Post Makes it Personal®, the Accreditation Department developed a program to advise students at each stage of the licensure process. Students are provided with personalized credentialing advising before, during, and after their enrollments by a small team of credentialing specialists. Starting with the graduate counseling enrollments in 2020, and extending to the accounting, nurse practitioner, and teaching English language learner enrollments in 2021, over 4,500 potential students and thousands more active students have been outreached regarding licensure. Students have expressed a great reduction in stress and anxiety, knowing that they have a plan to reach their professional goals before they even begin class and a partner in navigating the complicated path to licensure.

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The Chicago School (CA)

Awarded: Location - Identifying student location for regulatory compliance and reporting requirements.

Title: Embracing Purposeful Engagement for a California Institution

The Chicago School is a non-profit public institution with a national presence, offering over thirty graduate and undergraduate programs in professional fields such as psychology, business, health services, education, counseling, and more. These programs are offered in online/distance modality as well as on-ground. The institution's Office of Accreditation, Licensure, & State Authorization (ALSA), in response to the need to track student locations for non-NC-SARA institutions, has developed and adopted processes to facilitate compliance with all state authorization activities without the ability to join NC-SARA. In conjunction with state authorization compliance The Chicago School has worked to create a solid and comprehensive process to determine, track, and monitor students declared state of residency and states of licensure to ensure our students are well informed.

The process and procedures of The Chicago School's locations disclosure process follows an internal tracking, audit, and annual gap analysis of all authorized programs and states. Initially, as a student begins the admission process, they are asked to disclose not only their state of

residence but any state they intend to be licensed in after completion of the program. They are immediately notified (via an automated pop up linked to our ALSA audits) if their program does not meet licensure requirements for the state they chose. If they continue to enroll, they are then counseled by a program expert and asked to acknowledge the information provided on licensure for their state(s). Additionally, we have built into the student portal an automated notice if they make an address change, again immediately informing the student if the new state they are changing to does not meet licensure requirements. Should they identify a state the program is not eligible they are routed to a counselor to further obtain acknowledgment. A final aspect is the 14-day federal requirement that is triggered by ALSA should we become aware of a change in state requirements.

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Sinclair Community College (OH)

Awarded: Location - Identifying student location for regulatory compliance and reporting requirements.

Title: Professional Licensure Disclosures

Founded in 1887, Sinclair is the nation's oldest continually operating community college and has more than 30,000 students at its main campus and four regional centers as well as online. Since 1979, Sinclair has offered robust, student-centered distance education and eLearning-infused opportunities for all learners based on Quality Matters design principles. For 136 years, Sinclair has heeded the credo of founder David Sinclair to "find the need and endeavor to meet it," and continually strives to maintain focus on quality and innovation, sustainability, accessibility, and community alignment to provide the Miami Valley region with the highest standard in educational opportunities. Because of that, Sinclair consistently ranks among the top community colleges in America and a top choice for students.

Sinclair identified the need for this project last year in response to the out-of-state disclosure requirement (34 CFR §668.43 (c)) that requires an institution to provide direct disclosure notifications to students if the program leads to professional licensure. The first step was to collect a list of Sinclair programs that lead to professional licensure and create a database that identifies if the program satisfies education requirements by state. Then, by cross-referencing student records to determine student location, the database automatically triggers an email with personalized direct disclosure information to students, keeping the college's actions in compliance with regulations. Multiple offices across campus were involved in the creation and delivery of the Professional License Disclosures Database; however, under the leadership of the Provost Office, the eLearning Compliance Department and the Research, Analytics, and Reporting Office (RAR) were critical in the development and the success of the project. In partnership, a resilient system was created to maintain compliance, deliver necessary information to students, and keep detailed records for internal and external reporting. The Professional License Disclosures Database may serve as a blueprint for other institutions to create an efficient system to fulfill the obligations for compliance with out-of-state disclosure requirements.

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About the State Authorization Network (SAN)

SAN is a membership organization serving more than 800 postsecondary institutions and agencies nationwide to collaboratively navigate regulatory compliance for out-of-state activities of postsecondary institutions. By empowering members to successfully resolve educational technology regulatory challenges, members improve postsecondary learner opportunities and protections. SAN serves its members by providing resources, analysis, and training as well as facilitating communication so that members can cooperate to identify common needs, track emerging policies and regulations, evaluate their efficacy, and share lessons learned.

Learn more: <https://wcetSAN.wiche.edu>

