Cheryl Dowd (00:00):

Welcome. I'm Cheryl Dowd, senior director, policy innovations for the State Authorization Network. And I'm pleased to present the 2021 SANsational Award winning projects. Today, we're going to introduce the great work of our colleagues from the University of South Dakota. So the SANsational award is an annual award conceived in 2015 to recognize the outstanding work of SAN members to develop solutions, strategies, and manage state and federal regulations for out-of-state activity compliance that serves to provide student protections. One can understand that establishing processes and procedures to support compliance isn't a one-size-all-fits, one-size-all, project. 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 (00:59):

Awards are determined through a process that includes self-nomination of projects to a review committee, who evaluates and identifies the projects that should be awarded. Note that we archive these projects. You can find these on the SAN Website. On the SAN Website, there's a dedicated page to the SANsational Awards where you can see past winners and their projects. Thank you for the good work and support throughout this process to our review committee, who has been outstanding in the support of the SANsational Awards. And now I'd like to turn it over to my colleague, Rachel Stachowiak, director, interstate policy and compliance.

Rachael Stachowiak (01:36):

Thanks so much for that introduction, Cheryl, and sharing about those sort of hallmarks of this project. We are so pleased today to award University of South Dakota in the category of Compliance Innovation. Winning projects in this category share and highlight institution, policy tools, compliance teamwork, and other inventive or novel compliance management practices which can be adapted by other institutions, as Cheryl had shared. LaDonna Rodvold and Julie Barnett hold an important responsibility to manage and synthesize data amongst seven different colleges and universities within University of South Dakota They, and other compliance professionals, are charged with the responsibility of bringing together their campus stakeholders to understand and share information about their educational activities like online learning, internships, externships, field trips. However, there are also experts who have to navigate and interpret a very complex landscape of changing federal and state rules.

Rachael Stachowiak (02:46):

So why do we comply? Vital to the regulatory work that they do and institutions undertake, is the fact that states oversee respective activities, which occur within their borders. And it's within the state's purview to protect and serve the interests of their citizens as consumers, and that includes students. So for post-secondary circumstances, this begins when an institution opens its doors, when it wishes to confer degrees. And then state oversight also extends two activities which occur outside of the institution's primary location. So the fundamental piece we have to remember is wherever the activity occurs, institutions are obligated to review and follow rules of that particular locality. This requirements often called state authorization, maybe licensing or certification, is a couple terms that we use. The second and the critical connections you keep in mind is obtaining and managing these state approvals, also happens to serve as one condition for participation in federal title for Higher Education Act programs. And institutions who neglect these obligations jeopardize their participation in federal programs. And they also risk consequences without obtaining or following rules overseen by that foundational entity, the state or states in which they operate.

Rachael Stachowiak (04:10):

So consequences can vary. They may include fines, cease and desist letters, barring licensure of the regulated professions. All of these things amount to bad publicity, or even worse, disruption to the students' progress. So our compliance work sits in a complicated but very necessary regulatory landscape. USD's project is unique in that it creates a campus-wide infrastructure, which centralizes multiple elements of compliance information data amongst several faculty and staff members within those different schools and colleges.

Rachael Stachowiak (04:49):

LaDonna and Julie's knowledge base not only provides sort of the collection of tools like spreadsheets and forms, but also foundational and contextual information to help their faculty and staff more clearly understand why the information and data that they share with the compliance team is so critical to USD's work. Additionally, they were very resourceful to utilize the existing systems that their faculty and staff already utilize in their daily workflow. So, hopefully, that's lessening to, or lessening the learning curve, for their campus contributors while being mindful of budgets. So Julie and LaDonna are with us today. We want to congratulate you on winning this award and for your great and diligent work to conceptualize a very efficient and cost effective suite of tools. And before we turn to your video presentation, I just wanted to open up the forum and ask maybe if you could share a little about the landscape of your campus's efforts before integrating this compliance innovation, and then how you continue to get the word out on your campus about this knowledge base.

Julie Barnett (06:02):

Well, thank you, Rachael. We are very excited for this award as well. Before integrating, our compliance efforts that were created were a bit cumbersome because the data didn't integrate into formats that were specific to the user's needs and users needed to sort through data that wasn't relevant to them. So we needed to manually enter information into different formats, and that just wasn't feasible in the long run with all of the new regulations. Prior to placing tools in the knowledge base, there was always the risk of using outdated information in forms. And now as the name describes, and we'll talk about in our presentation, they go to the Coyote One Stop and everything they need is there laid out for them.

LaDonna Rodvold (06:50):

As far as how we continue to get the word out, when we visit with people, we direct them to the knowledge base, reminding them that that is always the most up-to-date information. When we meet with them, we walk through the forms with the people that need to complete them so that they become comfortable and they see how easy those forms are to complete and to submit. We walk through the spreadsheets with the people needing that information so that they can see what has been submitted and how they can check to see if anything else needs to be done. Walking through these tools with them really helps create that personal connection that makes it easier for them to reach out when they have questions or concerns. It creates an innovative environment for allowing them to say, "Is there somewhere where I can see." And then we can continue to make it more relevant to their needs.

LaDonna Rodvold (07:44):

We're always looking for new ways to make things easier for the end user. And currently, we are creating a series of videos to explain these tools. This will be helpful when new people come on board and when people are moving to the next step of compliance. Giving them too much information at one time is confusing and not easily remembered. So we're hoping that these series of videos will provide them the details as they move forward. Always looking for a way that makes it easier for them to comply because they have a ton of other things to be doing. So the easier we can make it for them, the better off everyone is

Rachael Stachowiak (08:22):

Such great points and so important to be consultative in the process and help them through understanding how best to utilize the system. So bravo to you, LaDonna and Julie. Thank you so much for sharing today and sharing your project with us. We offer our congratulations to you again and look forward to spreading the good word about your work. So thank you so much and congratulations.

LaDonna Rodvold (08:53):

Greetings, from the University of South Dakota. We are happy to share with you the robust, minimal cost tools we developed for state authorization and professional licensure compliance. USD's state authorization team consists of, Julie Barnett, director of continuing and distance education and myself, LaDonna Rodvold, state authorization specialist. Together, we have forged productive, working relationships across USD's seven colleges and schools. Julie will introduce you to the University of South Dakota.

Julie Barnett (09:41):

The University of South Dakota has seven colleges and schools. We are the first university founded in the Dakotas in 1862 and are the only public liberal arts university in the state. USD has 202 undergraduate programs and 84 graduate programs. 35 online degree and certificate programs and 83 of our programs are designed to lead to let professional licensure. With an enrollment of nearly 10,000 students and more than 400 faculty, USD has a 15:1 student-faculty ratio. USD is home of the Coyotes. Our 18 athletic programs compete at the NCAA Division I level. USD is ranked, for the 30th consecutive year, as one of the best national universities by U.S. News & World Report, as well as other rankings among the best in academics and affordability. USD is an NC-SARA approved institution.

Julie Barnett (10:48):

Rooted in South Dakota values, USD's strategic plan includes being responsible stewards. We strive to make USD education affordable to every qualified student by operating efficiently and effectively with high quality standards to minimize financial barriers to a life changing experience. With USD's value of responsible stewardship in the forefront, and as state authorization and professional licensure data management needs expanded with evolving compliance requirements, LaDonna and I set out to search for budget-friendly options. We found a lack of robust, minimal cost commercial software that would seamlessly integrate with our current data. We were looking for something that would be easy to learn and maintain, and that would be usable across all of USD's seven colleges and schools. So we've brainstormed and coupled our expertise to develop a functional solution within stringent budget restrictions for computer software and ProContract services.

Julie Barnett (11:51):

We enlisted the help of universitywide expertise to develop, implement, and maintain these tools. Over the years of collaboration, the compliance components were outlined, collected, tracked, reported, disseminated, and integrated, making the data relevant and understandable universitywide. We will show you those tools in a minute, but first we'll show you the software from which they were developed.

Julie Barnett (12:22):

We needed to use software that could integrate and make the data meaningful, and that was already widely used throughout the university. That led us to Google Workspace for Education Fundamentals. This program is free and available to qualified institutions and includes familiar programs such as Google Docs, Google Sheets, Google Forms, and the ability to insert links from document saved in Google Drive. For security purposes, USD's accessibility requires two-step verification. These tools can be adapted to other document sharing platforms as well. Then, we chose two pieces of subscription software that are used across the university, Adobe Pro for PDFs, which is typically available at most institutions, and the document signing software, DocuSign. You could easily replace DocuSign with the approval method that your institution uses. Coupling the free software with USD's ongoing subscription to Adobe Pro and DocuSign, these innovations have had minimal impact on the university budget.

Julie Barnett (13:39):

Now that the softwares was selected, we outlined the types of information that needed to be compiled, tracked, disseminated, and assessed, and wrote the content and added the formulas to integrate all the data. To gather the required information, we requested and received assistance from various university personnel, such as the curriculum coordinator, institutional research IT designer, program directors, academic deans, academic personnel, IT department, provosts' council, and the deans' council. This development and implementation process took place over a period of two years. Now that the tools are set up, they can be updated, streamlined, enhanced, and adapted in a much quicker manner.

Julie Barnett (14:32):

We communicate these compliance tools with our colleges and schools through face to face meetings. LaDonna is invited to the president to present at the provosts' council and or deans' council at least twice a year. Members of these leadership councils are strong advocates and very supportive of compliance efforts and communicate the importance to their individual departments. During college, school and departmental meetings, these tools are demonstrated by LaDonna so everyone can see firsthand how easy they are to understand, complete, submit and review. They also see where the documents are located in Coyote One Stop and in Google Sheets, both of which LaDonna will explain next.

LaDonna Rodvold (15:28):

Our first tool is actually the toolbox, Coyote One Stop. Coyote One Stop is USD's internal knowledge-based portal. As its name suggests, it conveniently communicates information in an easily accessible format, familiar to all USD colleges and schools. Our IT department hosts the portal and updates it anytime we have new information. The content is written in a straightforward, summarized fashion, where all university personnel can easily see their role in compliance, understand why compliance is critical, and easily and quickly access the other tools.

LaDonna Rodvold (16:21):

In addition to the tool box, we have four other tools; Physical Presence Checklist, OAR Reporting Form, Professional Licensure Determination PDF and Data Management Sheets. The first two tools are used for reporting off-campus and out-of-state activities. Those tools are the Physical Presence Checklist and the OAR Reporting Form. These tools help gather timely information on activities requiring the need for out-of-state authorization and disclosures and the annual SARA Out-of-State Learning Placement or OOSLP data reporting. The Physical Presence Checklist concisely outlines the types of activities or triggers that could meet the definition of off-campus physical presence. The checklist corresponds to a simple OAR Form or standing for, Off-Campus/Out-of-State Activity Report, which is submitted by departments as part of their activity planning. A Google response sheet electronically collects the information submitted through the OARs. Here is a view of the Physical Presence Checklist. The details are too small to see on this slide but I want to point out that it is organized into three categories, learning placements, or OOSLPs, taking place anywhere, activities not covered by SARA and taking place outside our home state, and activities taking place in non-SARA locations.

LaDonna Rodvold (18:22):

Here is the first part of the OAR, Off-Campus/Out-of-State Activity Report, Form. It is designed to be completed in four minutes, or less, as part of the department's planning process for off-campus activities, prior to the activity taking place. The first part asks for their contact information. Then they select whether they are reporting learning placements or all other physical presence activities. From here, the form uses skip logic. If they choose learning placements, they are taken to eight questions relevant to those placements. If they choose other activities, they are taken to six questions relevant to those types of activities. Here is the actual OAR Form. As I showed you before, the first part is their contact information. The next part is where they choose which of the types of activities they are reporting. Then if they choose other physical presence, they select what type of trigger activity that is.

LaDonna Rodvold (19:37):

The letters on the OAR Form correspond with the letters on the Physical Presence Checklist to make easy reference for them when they're completing the form. They briefly describe the activity, let us know the start date and the location where that activity is taking place. Then they're complete with the other physical presence activities and we move on to the learning placement opportunity portion of the form. They choose which type of learning placement it is, answer two questions regarding professional licensure, two questions about their program, the calendar year in which the opportunity takes place, the start date, how many students are simultaneously placed in one site and then they indicate the number of students in the applicable states. It also includes territories. And for any states that have additional instructions, that is included on the form as well. Then they continue on indicating the states in which they have students and submit the form to me.

LaDonna Rodvold (21:22):

Responses from those OAR forms populate into a Google response sheet. It compiles all the information received from the OAR Form. The columns are color coded for easy distinction of the two tracks. Aqua is for learning placements, yellow is for all other activities. The form response sheet is the first sheet populated from the submitted OARs, and it is used to determine whether USD has proper authorization to offer those activities. Those responses then populate into other linked sheets. A learning placement sheet is designed to correspond with the Annual SARA OOSLP report, as the sheet contains the requested information and automatically sorts and tallys the information by calendar year, ZIP code and state. The totals are then entered into the online OOSLP reporting form. The other physical present sheet contains all other activities. Individual sheets for each college and school show them what has already been reported so that placements are not overlooked.

LaDonna Rodvold (22:46):

The next tool is the Professional Licensure Determination PDF. To standardize the licensure determination process, we developed a fillable PDF form that allows academic program content experts to enter information needed to determine whether their program meets the educational requirements for licensure in each state. I'll show you the form in a minute. The form is submitted to me for review for completeness and for routing via DocuSign for approval by appropriate program director, academic dean, or anyone else the school desires. The approved PDFs are housed in Google Drive and linked in individual sheets for each college and school. Access to the documents in Google Drive require two-step verification. And links to these PDFs and the disclosure information are included in the data management tool that I'll show you in a minute.

LaDonna Rodvold (23:55):

Here are the elements included in the PDF form. Again, the form is too small to read, but it is the elements that I want to point out. First, we have program information. They may fill in the state licensure entity information, the state licensure requirements. There are additional questions asked on pages that I don't have included here. The PDF is four pages total. The last page of the PDF contains the determination made by the department, the formal licensure disclosure statement and signatures of the approvers.

LaDonna Rodvold (24:52):

The final tool consists of our Data Management Sheets. These robust Google sheets were designed to seamlessly collect and compile our compliance data. It contains information about USD's programs, department contact information, communications with departments, state licensure board information, licensure determinations for each state, disclosure details, and much more. A master sheet automatically integrates via formulas with a variety of other data such as USD's complete list of programs, where each college and school verifies which program's parallel with federal definition of a licensure track program. Individual college and school sheets provide information relevant to their programs and their licensure determinations. USD's data dashboard populates the interactive disclosure map on our state authorization and licensure web pages.

LaDonna Rodvold (26:11):

Here is the start of the master sheet. It includes college department program contact information. It allows them to let us know if it leads to licensure certification endorsement, pre or post licensure, other or none. There's a column to make notes of the licensure PDF process and its status. There are additional comment columns. We found out early on that you always want a few placeholder columns because you'll find a need for them down the road. We have a column for status updates, about the individual disclosures, who sends the initial program disclosure letter, the information about their program and the program information that feeds into the dashboard and its web pages.

LaDonna Rodvold (27:17):

The master sheet continues with information on each United States and territories. This information comes from the licensure disclosure PDFs. Here's an example of Alabama and our home state of South Dakota. The information highlighted in yellow feeds into the data dashboard, which feeds into our web page. The other columns contain additional information from the PDF such as, whether our program and or learning placements require approval, if our faculty need to be licensed in that state, the documented determination PDF, and the date that we need to review that information once again.

LaDonna Rodvold (28:13):

I mentioned the master sheet integrates with the complete list of USD programs. Each year, departments review this list of programs for accuracy. This is the sheet that also directs the state authorization or professional licensure disclosures that are located on the individual program curriculum pages. They'll also see the CIP Code that is helpful for the OOSLP report. Here is an example of an individual sheet for the School of Health Sciences. The salmon color column indicates state authorization information, and the next column indicates the professional licensure information, once again coming from those licensure determination PDFs. Here is the data dashboard that feeds into our interactive disclosure maps. The top example populates into the state authorization map. The bottom example populates the licensure map. Here is the interactive dashboard on USD's web page. It is on our state authorization page as well as our licensure track programs and past rates page. Here you will see the interactive map, the state authorization map and then we have the disclosures map. And then they are listed by program and state for students to very easily find their particular program or state that they are interested in.

Julie Barnett (30:08):

That's our robust, minimal cost tools for state authorization and professional licensure compliance. Again, they are the Coyote One Stop, the Physical Presence Checklist, the OAR Reporting Form, Professional Licensure Determination PDF and the Data Management Sheets. If you have any questions, please feel free to let us know.