FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Contact: Michael Sessa
PESC Executive Director
+1.202.261.6516

Public Comment Requested on COD
30 Day Public Comment Period Now Open on Common Origination and Disbursement

(Washington DC) - The Board of Directors of the Postsecondary Electronic Standards Council (PESC) is pleased to announce that Federal Student Aid (FSA) of the U.S. Department of Education has proposed the Common Origination and Disbursement (COD) specification as a PESC approved, education community standard.

"I am pleased to submit this letter to notify PESC that Federal Student Aid intends to work collaboratively with the higher education community to develop the...XML Common Origination and Disbursement Schema for Federal Student Aid Title IV programs," states the Letter of Intent submitted by Lisa Elliott, Data Governance and Metadata Manager of Federal Student Aid. "We look forward to continuing collaboration in pursuit of higher education standards," Ms. Elliott's letter continues.

Common Origination & Disbursement (COD) is a streamlined method for processing, storing, and reconciling Academic Competitiveness Grant (ACG), National Science and Mathematics Access To Retain Talent Grant [National SMART Grant], Federal Pell Grant [Pell Grant], and William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan [Direct Loan] financial aid data with the U.S. Department of Education. Schools, third party servicers, and software developers can obtain information about current production issues, news, and COD System functionality through various channels such as the COD Website (http://cod.ed.gov) and the IFAP Website (http://ifap.ed.gov).

With the development work completed and submitted on May 22, 2008, the COD specification is now immediately ready for public comment period. The complete submission can be accessed at www.PESC.org. The public comment period begins today Thursday May 22, 2008 and will be thirty (30) calendar days. Public comment period expires at the close of business on Friday June 20, 2008.

All comments, from the PESC Membership and the public, shall be made in the form of an e-mail to the PESC Executive Director at: Michael.Sessa@PESC.org. The comment e-mail should clearly identify the:
1) Responder name and appropriate contact information;
2) Source of the comments, i.e., whether the comments are individual or represent those of a group the responder represents;
3) Nature of the responder’s interest in the standard {what is the issue and why is it important?};
4) Element(s) of the proposed standard with which issue is taken;
5) Changes suggested to resolve the issue(s).

**The Process**

Within 30 calendar days after the close of the public comment period, the Change Control Board [CCB] of the Standards Forum for Education will address and consider all public comments and make, in consultation with Federal Student Aid any necessary revisions. All public comments will be posted to the PESC website during the review process. The CCB’s consideration/revision period expires on Monday July 21, 2008 unless extenuating circumstances exist which require further deliberation.

Once any changes resulting from the public comment period have been incorporated, the CCB will recommend to the Standards Forum’s Steering Committee and the PESC Board of Directors that the COD Specification be submitted to a vote by the PESC Members. The Board will have seven (7) calendar days to approve the submission or refer it back to the CCB with specific instructions for further work. The PESC office will issue electronic ballots to the official contacts of voting Member organizations.

Completed ballots, including the reason[s] for any rejection, must be returned to the PESC office via e-mail attachment, fax, overnight delivery, or U.S. Postal Service within ten (10) business days. PESC staff is responsible for the tabulation of the ballots; acceptance of the specification as a standard requires an affirmative vote of at least 80% of all votes cast. Once the Members accept and approve the specification, the PESC Board of Directors will within seven (7) calendar days ratify the vote. PESC staff will publish/post all necessary documents and communications and implement version control on all documents. Approved standards are freely accessible on the PESC website [www.PESC.org].

For more information, please visit www.PESC.org.

**About PESC**

Established in 1997 and located in Washington, D.C., the Postsecondary Electronic Standards Council (PESC) is a non-profit, community-based, umbrella association of colleges and universities; professional and commercial organizations; data, software and service providers; and state and federal government agencies. PESC’s mission is to lead the establishment and adoption of data exchange standards in education. The goals of the mission are to enable the improvement of institutional performance and foster collaboration across educational communities in order to lower costs, improve service, and attain system interoperability.