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### SEVIS batch processing concerns IT departments

Colleges and universities and their software and service providers are scrambling to understand and implement the new federally-mandated electronic system for tracking foreign students by the January 2003 deadline. Referred to as SEVIS (Student Exchange Visitor Information System), the system is being designed by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service to monitor foreign students by tracking which foreign applicants colleges accept, the dates on which they enter and leave the United States, and changes to their status while in the country.

On September 4th, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* hosted a live, online discussion to address concerns regarding implementation of SEVIS. This discussion, monitored by *Chronicle* editor Jeffrey Selingo, was led by M. Stella Jarina, director of student operations at the INS.

While most of the questions posed to Jarina focused on the effects of the tracking system on students and specifics about when and what the regulations will entail, still others were concerned about the implications of the technical specifications.

Facing the January 2003 deadline, Murray State University’s Mark Galloway expressed concern about interfacing for batch processing, which uses extensible markup language (XML). “The final batch elements have just now been released and IT people will need time to go through these and come up with a working interface with a system that at least up until this day is still not in existence,” said Galloway.

### PESC TAPS NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

PESC Board of Directors Chair Keith Riccitelli announces on page 3 of this issue of *The Standard* that Michael Sessa, currently of American Student Assistance, has accepted the position of PESC Associate Executive Director beginning Oct. 21. Michael will become the Executive Director when Betsy Bainbridge steps down in mid-December. Betsy will be resigning at that time to accompany her husband on a longterm assignment in Italy.

See SEVIS, Page 8
The public review period of the postsecondary transcript schema ended on Aug. 26th with constructive comments and suggestions received from the Department of Education, the University of Cincinnati, and SCT regarding the design methodologies used in the schema. The Technology Workgroup is currently examining these recommendations and considering their inclusion in the schema and the "Technical Specifications." Bruce Marton, chair of the Architecture Team, prepared an overview of issues pertaining to the transcript schema and forwarded it to the XML Forum Steering Committee. The Steering Committee considered these issues at its September meeting and directed the Architecture Team to take additional time to prepare a second draft of the schema.

The XML Forum welcomes new members from Campus Management Corporation as well as Brendan Pryor from Access Group. We are currently reaffirming last year’s XML Forum volunteers’ interest in continued participation, as well as putting a call out to potentially new participants. If your organization is a PESC member or affiliate in good standing and you are interested in XML and its role in higher education transactions, please see the XML Forum’s website at www.pescxml.org or contact Ane Al-Sayyed at 202-293-9161 ext. 6400.

**REGISTER NOW FOR THE FALL MEETING**

PESC and XML Forum to meet in Spokane, WA, Oct. 22 and 23, 2002

The fall member meeting and XML Forum activities will take place in conjunction with AACRAO’s EDI/EC in Education Conference at the WestCoast Grand Hotel in Spokane, WA, all day Oct. 22nd and the morning Oct. 23rd.

The meetings, open to all PESC members and their representatives, will include business decisions and breakouts of smaller working groups to focus on the data dictionary, schema development and maintenance of the “Technical Specification.” A presentation on the use of web services in education will serve as a foundation for the formulation of PESC activities related to web services.

Meeting registration may be completed online at www.standardscouncil.org and hotel reservations should be made directly by calling the WestCoast Grand Hotel at 1-800-325-4000. Registrants should be sure to tell the reservations desk that they are attending the PESC meeting to take advantage of the special $89 a night hotel rate.

A draft itinerary, as well as information on hotel accommodations and registration can be found at www.standardscouncil.org.
Dear Friends and Colleagues:

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am very pleased to announce the appointment of Michael Sessa as PESC’s new Executive Director. Michael will be joining the PESC staff on October 21, 2002, as the interim Associate Executive Director until Betsy Bainbridge takes her leave in December. We have planned for two months of overlap between Michael’s start and Betsy’s departure to ensure a smooth and successful transition.

Michael will begin his new role with significant knowledge of PESC and its mission. He has been a long-time, active participant in PESC and a PESC Board member since July 2000. For the past year he has also been the Board’s liaison to the XML Forum and its Steering Committee.

Michael comes to us with ten years of experience with American Student Assistance (ASA) where he most recently held the position of Director of Program Relations and Planning. Prior to that he worked for several years in retail compliance for a Boston bank. He has been deeply involved in PESC, NCHELP, and NASLA efforts and has worked closely with the Department of Education.

I encourage you to come to the series of meetings being held in Spokane, October 22-23, to welcome Michael and hear what he has to say about the future of PESC, to wish Betsy a buon viaggio, and to help us celebrate PESC’s fifth anniversary. Registration information for these meetings is available at www.StandardsCouncil.org.

Sincerely,

Keith Riccitelli  
Chair  
PESC Board of Directors
Phillip Clark is General Manager, Long Range Business Planning at SCT Global Education Solutions, where he is responsible for analysis of new product business plans and the impact of new technologies on the education market. During his first five years with SCT, Phillip managed the education division’s strategic product planning and new product development activities. Phillip serves on the editorial board of The Technology Source (http://ts.mivu.org/default.asp).

Phillip is also on the Board of Directors of HEKATE (Higher Education Technology and Knowledge Exchange), a newly formed non-profit organization dedicated to bringing together the education and vendor communities to jointly develop new products for the learner of the 21st century.

**Will you tell our readers a little about the Higher Education Knowledge and Technology Exchange’s organization and what goals it has set for itself?**

HEKATE is a group of people with a heart-felt commitment to improving the education experience through the use of developing technologies. It is important to note that these are people that are more focused on being agents of change for all aspects of the education experience—learning, teaching, administering, counseling, services, etc.

HEKATE members see the value of what works today but also know that it takes a special kind of work to put emerging technologies to work where they offer real benefits. Change is never easy, and it takes extra effort to find the value in new technologies and to promote their use.

Critical to bringing change to the education community is creating a dialog among the full community of players, in an atmosphere of trust. These two issues create the basic foundation of the HEKATE organization. HEKATE has established membership categories for leading-edge thinkers from educational institutions throughout the world, for the vendor community serving the education market, for individual students and faculty—for anyone that has an interest in improving the education experience worldwide. In support of this we are already working to
establish chapters in India, Australia, and Canada.

The trust issue is equally important because change agents need to trust that those they work with have the same goals and commitment. To achieve that feeling of trust, membership in HEKATE is by invitation and sponsorship. New members must be sponsored by a current member. This may slow our growth somewhat, but we will be more effective by having a membership that shares the same goals and vision.

**Considering the organization was just founded in April of this year, how would you characterize the interest and participation of the postsecondary community?**

Participation has been surprisingly strong. HEKATE has received press coverage out of proportion to our size, and reviews of our recently published white paper have provided us with additional recognition. We have recently added SUN, WebCT and Sallie Mae Solutions as vendor members to the list that already includes BlackBoard, eCollege, infiNET, Oracle, and SCT.

Institutional members include California State University–Monterey Bay, Case Western Reserve University, University of North Carolina, and Michigan State, among others. Individual memberships from both the educational, private, and vendor communities are growing just as strongly.

**Will you explain exactly what the Technology in Education, Research, and Instruction (TERI) Index will help to measure? What types of things will be used as benchmarks?**

Responding to interest by colleges and universities as well as the vendor community, HEKATE and Converge Magazine are developing benchmarks for the use of information technology in higher education.

HEKATE Board Chairman and Vice-President for Information Technology Services at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio, notes that “There are best practices, rankings, ratings, and reports out there that universities use to gauge how they are doing with information technology. What’s missing are mechanisms for colleges and universities to determine where they are—and what they can aim for—in their effective use in the application of technology to student and faculty engagement, learning support, and integration into the active research arena.”

Existing technology comparisons tend to focus on the volume and availability of information technology: the number of network connections, computers, computer facilities, etc. They do not focus on educational improvement. They also don’t focus on how technology supports all of the functions of colleges and universities.

HEKATE’s goal with the TERI Index is to focus attention on the results of using information technology in all aspects of college and university life. Across disciplines, across functions, and across constituents, the TERI Index aims to provide non-competitive points of comparison. Using the TERI Index, HEKATE and Converge Magazine hope to inspire effective uses of information technology across the triad of higher education functions: teaching, research and service. TERI repre-
sents these functions in its name.

*According to HEKATE’s website one of its missions is to “shape the next generation of products for the 21st Century learner.” What standards are being considered for use in these solutions?*

HEKATE works by generating dialog on technologies that have potential to enhance the education experience. Out of this dialog among the full education community as described earlier, we believe a consensus develops over what technologies have the potential for real impact in areas that have strong need for improvement. The “looseness” of this approach allow us to use the energy of passion for a particular issue to motivate our change agent activities. As noted earlier, setting direction for change is not an easy road to travel. Those going down that road need all the energy they can find.

*Is HEKATE a member of any of the standards-setting organizations?*

HEKATE is not currently a member of any standards setting organizations. As noted in the recently published white paper on web services, HEKATE believes standards will be a key element of the changes we are working to bring about. As our focus on specific projects matures we will work with the appropriate standards organizations to insure the acceptance and effectiveness of changes we seek to bring about. An example of this is our dialog with PESC on the issue of web services direction and value definition and the consequential need for standards to make web services work.

*The organization has two middleware forums in place. How important is middleware to higher education institutions?*

Much of the literature from the analyst community now cites the emerging need to fit multiple technical solutions together to meet the practical needs of transforming the education experience. Middleware is the key to making that work. Without some kind of middleware and standards to make implementation more affordable, innovative solutions new to the market will be difficult to fit into mainstream technical solutions. Given the speed of technical change, success is going to be dependent on the best strategies for putting innovative solutions to work earlier and at lower cost.

*What initiatives can we expect from HEKATE in the future?*

At this point HEKATE needs to maintain a focus on current initiatives to demonstrate value to its membership, emphasize efforts to build a formal organization and the size of its membership, including the development of international chapters. There has been some discussion of addressing the need for improving assessment practices to deliver value to life-long learners in an on-line world, but our commitment to new initiatives will come out of a full membership meeting planned for October in Vancouver, British Columbia.
ED names new head for its modernization office

The student loan community was filled with regret when Greg Woods announced his resignation from the post of Chief Operating Officer of the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Federal Student Aid, but regret quickly gave way to concern and a tinge of panic when his interim replacement, Candy Kane, resigned recently to take a position with PricewaterhouseCoopers.

It wasn’t until Aug. 28 that Secretary of Education Rod Paige answered all the questions, rumors and recommendations being passed around in conversation or by email across the community with the announcement of Theresa Shaw’s appointment to the lead spot.

While few in the student loan community know her well enough to speculate on her success as the new COO, those who do seem confident that she will have no problems filling the position.

“She ran a big IT department, and she knows how to get things done,” said Shelly Repp, General Council with the National Council of Higher Education Loan Programs.

Shaw most recently served as vice president and COO of eNumerate Solutions Inc., a start-up technology firm, where she oversaw the development of the company’s first commercial software products.

More importantly to those in the student loan business, however, is Shaw’s nearly two decades of work with Sallie Mae. While Shaw has held a number of positions with Sallie Mae, possibly the most important to her post at FSA is her work with the development of student loan delivery and servicing systems, including Laureate, Sallie Mae’s Internet-based student loan management and delivery system.

“She’s a good manager, she knows the business, she knows IT and she will get things done,” said Paige.

Shaw is currently working with staff members at FSA and with Department administration in preparation for assuming full responsibility this month.

“She’s a good manager, she knows the business, she knows IT and she will get things done,” said Repp.

Paige mirrored Repp’s comments in a prepared statement “Terri brings a wealth of experience in information technology management to the Department. Her expertise in this area will be invaluable as we continue to upgrade and integrate our student financial aid systems.”
PESC offers ‘webinar’ on practical XML

On October 16, 17 and 18, PESC is offering a “webinar”—a seminar on the web—entitled “Practical XML in Higher Education.”

Mike Rawlins, principal at Rawlins EC Consulting, has developed the 6-hour curriculum focusing on a technical approach to using XML, XML schema, and XSLT for e-business.

This webinar is tailored specifically for the education community, and the target audience is technical staff with at least a beginner-level knowledge of XML. It is limited to 10 participants so that questions may be asked and answered online.

Each of the three days from 3:00 to 5:00 pm Eastern, participants will log into a specified website and dial into a teleconference. Course preparation materials will include instructions for downloading evaluation copies of XML Spy for use in homework assignments.

Registration is first come, first served, although PESC members will be given priority. The cost is $300, considered a bargain for a professional development opportunity that requires no travel. (A similar but more generic course is being offered to October X12 trimester meeting attendees for $495.)

Registration and the course outline for the PESC webinar may be found at www.StandardsCouncil.org.

PESC wishes to thank Oracle for providing the web conferencing capability.

SEVIS From Page 1

These constraints prompted Galloway to ask Jarina if larger schools would be given a compliance extension, “because of the limitations of the web system and the inability to track thousands of students with this model.” Jarina replied simply, “No.”

According to Jarina, schools chose to use batch processing based on their own resources and should do a workload assessment to determine if using batch process is cost-effective.

“However, it should be noted, that the interface control document has been posted on our Web site since September 2001,” said Jarina. “The final specifications recently posted contain the full XML schema and standards.” (http://www.ins.usdoj.gov/graphics/services/tempbenefits/sevp.htm)

Patty Croom of Michigan State University commented that preparing the data to be sent to INS is not necessarily the issue, since most of the data already exists electronically, but the problem resides in the construction and testing of the sending process.

According to Croom, the current specs do not have details on how an institution may test and begin production of the batch component. Without SEVIS functionality and testing procedures present, Croom is concerned that there is not enough time to implement batch processing by the January deadline.

“We expect that a test platform for batch will be available in late September, and it is not expected that a school would have to be enrolled in SEVIS to test their interface,” explained Jarina.

The participants final question regarding technical issues centered around allowance for errors, such as typos and other data entry mistakes that are not the fault of the student.

According to Jarina, SEVIS should reduce the numbers of errors being made. As an example, Jarina commented that once a school creates an initial I-20 for a student in SEVIS, that becomes the name that will appear on all documents.

In addition, “There is an edit capability where a school can go in and correct information on the I-20, and there will of course be an audit trail of that information in the system,” said Jarina.
The National Council of Higher Education Loan Programs, Inc. (NCHELP), the National Student Clearinghouse and Priority Technologies, Inc., recently announced the launch of the Meteor Project software. Live testing of all components of the software was successfully completed in the final week of August. During the first weeks of September, access providers finalized their implementation by allowing schools to access student-specific loan information through Meteor, an open, online resource that aggregates data from a number of distributed sources.

According to IDC, XML is growing at a phenomenal rate with no signs of slowing. In the past year the XML servers market has grown 168 percent, which translates into an approximately $3.5 billion.

The team presented an interim version of the Schema to the AACRAO SPEEDE Committee on June 1, and their comments were incorporated into the draft release.

The education community was invited to review the Schema during the month of August and the responses were very gratifying.

Several members of our community, representing diverse perspectives and a wide range of interest and expertise, took considerable time to review the schema for technical robustness and functional usability.

The result has been a set of salient and specific proposals for improving the Schema both for immediate application and for ongoing re-usability and extensibility.

With this depth of interest and participation it has become clear that more time is needed to adequately review the Schema architecture in the context of new issues and arguments being put forth. As a result of discussions in its September meeting, the XML Forum Steering Committee has directed the Architecture Team to conduct this review.

Together with the Technology Workgroup we are currently examining system architecture proposals and will refer functional issues to the Core Components Workgroup. The results of these investigations will be presented at the XML Forum meeting in Spokane on Oct. 22 and 23.

This meeting is also an opportunity to consider potential reorganization of the workgroup structure, and the Steering Committee will appreciate getting member input at that time. We hope to see you there!

Architecture Team completes draft of transcript schema

On July 30 the XML Forum’s Architecture Team announced the completion of a full draft of the college transcript schema, its associated sector library, and the core data dictionary schema. This was based on the work of the Core Components workgroup which was sent to the Technology Workgroup where it was rendered into XML Schema.

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Technology Tidbits and Standard Snippets

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UT Austin Internet server ‘speeds’ through August

- 44,088 TS130 transcripts
- 36,319 TS131 acknowledgments
- 4,484 TS146 requests
- 4,237 TS997 functional acknowledgments
- 6,739 TS189 admission applications
- 2,465 TS138 test score reports
- 99,008 total transactions
market by 2006, according to IDC.

- **Oracle** recently asked the **W3C Architecture Working Group** to form a new industry-wide working group to focus on finding **consensus among emerging web services** standards for business-to-business transactions. Oracle expressed concern that too many overlapping specifications already exist. The proposal received 16 favorable votes, eight abstentions and one vote against the proposed group.

- Members of the **W3C’s Technical Architecture Group** (TAG) are preparing a document, the “**Architectural Principles of the World Wide Web**” (APW), intended to serve as a definitive statement of what the TAG has discovered and defined in relation to how the Web works.

- **OASIS** recently announced that it has formed a technical committee responsible for making it easier to manage distributed systems over the Internet. The **OASIS Management Protocol Technical Committee’s** mission is to help businesses manage their own **web services** as well as the interaction of those services with those of other companies. OASIS is currently reviewing a number of Web services standards for potential use in the Management Protocol, including XML, SOAP, OMI (Open Model Interface), and the Distributed Management Task Force’s CIM (Common Information Model). Developers interested in joining can find more information at [http://www.oasis-open.org/join](http://www.oasis-open.org/join).

- **Jones Knowledge Inc.** recently announced that it intends to give away the source code to its previously proprietary course management system. While no details about how the software will be made available to developers has been provided, the company indicates the software will be ready to share by the end of the year. Jones' course platform is written in PHP and works with the Sun Solaris operating system and MySQL, an open-source relational database, according to *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.

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"The nice thing about **STANDARDS** is that there are so many to choose from."

If you’re old enough, you may remember the competition between Betamax and VHS formats for video recorders way back in the ’70s. VHS became the de facto standard around 1980 as it began dominating the market. Most of us thought Betamax had been dead since then, but National Public Radio recently reported that Sony announced in August that it was only now discontinuing production of the Betamax video cassette recorder. Although none were being sold in the US, apparently Betamax recorders had a small market in Japan. Will DVD soon replace VHS as the de facto standard for video?