ED Provides Guidance in the Wake of Katrina

“Our hearts go out to the victims of this unspeakable tragedy. We stand ready to help—and will do everything in our power to meet the needs of those affected. We will work to ensure that federal student aid rules are applied in a way that enables every student displaced by Hurricane Katrina to continue his or her education.”

Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings


Public Comment Period on “CRC” Ends Friday, September 30, 2005

The 30-day public comment period for Common Record: CommonLine (“CRC”) expires at the close of business on Friday, September 30, 2005. All comments, from the PESC Membership and the public, shall be made in the form of an e-mail to PESC Executive Director at: Sessa@PESC.org. The comment e-mail should clearly identify the:

- Responder name and appropriate contact information;
- Source of the comments, i.e., whether the comments are individual or represent those of a group the responder represents;
- Nature of the responder’s interest in CRC (what is the issue and why is it important?);
- Element(s) of CRC with which issue is taken;
- Changes suggested to resolve the issue(s).

The Electronic Standards Committee of the National Council of Higher Education Loan Programs proposed CRC as an approved and recognized education community standard and the complete submission can be accessed at http://www.PESC.org/Workgroups/CommonRecord/.
Interview with 
Craig Cornell

Director of Financial Aid
Bowling Green State University

Tell us about Bowling Green State University.

Bowling Green was founded in 1910. It is a comprehensive 4-year public university in Northwest Ohio. It has two campuses—BG Main and a regional campus, Firelands College, in Huron, Ohio. BGSU serves more than 21,000 students in over 200 undergraduate majors in seven undergraduate colleges and over 66 Masters and 16 doctoral programs. Over 7,000 students live in our residence halls and we employ 861 full-time faculty.

How many trading partners does the University have?

The University has three main trading partners. We are a Direct Loan school, therefore we exchange information with the Department of Education for Common Origination and Disbursement, as well as student records and that type of information. Secondly, we use the Clearinghouse for enrollment data. Our final trading partner would be third-party lenders for student alternative loans.

Does your school use XML?

In the financial aid department it is used for Common Origination and Disbursement Records. We are also expecting the ISIR to be completely XML-based coming out of ED very soon.

What are the biggest technological concerns we face in higher education?

Sifting through it all to determine what is most relevant and applicable to your needs as an office. Once that is determined, the next step is the staff training and re-training needed to best meet student expectations with technology.

By the time we fully implement any technology, the students are already comfortable with it because they have usually been using most technolo-
gies long before the University itself uses any particular technology. The reverse of that is when we do lag behind, students are pretty willing to do whatever it takes to get what they need. While we are often concerned about meeting the students’ expectations, the students will happily fill out a paper form if it produces the result they are looking for. On the same token if we implement a new technology, the students will adapt to it almost instantly—again because they will follow any process to get their desired result.

**What is your take on this concern?**

One, I need to keep abreast of what is out there and be able to understand our systems and students to best make the puzzle come together. Secondly, I need to continually analyze policies, procedures and staffing issues to make sure we are able to be adaptable. When looking at technology, we need to keep in mind that just because a technology is available, doesn’t mean we need to implement it. We don’t need technology just for technology’s sake.

**If you could change one thing, what would it be and why?**

One of the biggest issues in the financial aid office is the difference between what you want to do and what your system is able to do. The system is able to do what it can do because of the way in which it was built. This is why I enjoy my work with PESC. The standards that we—schools, banks, vendors, etc.—work to develop now will drive how the financial aid systems will be built to work and interact in the future.

I don’t think people really understand the benefit of being a part of the standards creation. I think they are just focused on getting the job done with the systems they have. Therefore, if I could change one thing I would I would make it so every financial aid officer in the country understood the importance of standards.

**How does your school deal with privacy and security?**

We currently have an INFOSPEC committee working on ISO standards. Our systems require multiple sign-ins and secure ID cards to gain access to various entities within the system. We also have begun to take a hard look at how we handle data, even within our own campus community. We don’t transfer sensitive information through wireless networks. We use secure FTP Servers.

The privacy issue, has caused us to second guess a number of items. For instance, just because you “can” transfer information electronically doesn’t mean you “should.” Sometimes, you should put the needed information in an envelope and walk it over to the department that needs it. We also have had to take a look at non-tech methods, such as issues as simple as what stuff we leave on our desks.

The University now also requires all devices that could be used for the transfer of information—laptops, blackberries, cell phones, palm pilots, etc.—be registered with the University. The user is held responsible for all information transferred from that device.

**Is interoperability achievable?**

Interoperability is achievable if all parties agree or it becomes mandated. I think it will be a combination of these two that will bring interoperability to the community.

This is one of the things that it is exciting about PESC. It is a community of people with different needs and agendas all coming together to agree about how to transfer data. With all these groups coming together and agreeing to move forward to achieve interoperability, those entities that haven’t decided to attempt interoperability will be forced to adapt to the new methods.
How does your school and NASFAA support standards?

NASFAA is a founding member of PESC and has worked with the development of standards from the beginning.

The University supports PESC through the organizations we are in that support PESC, the purchase and conversion to Peoplesoft (now Oracle), which is a PESC member, and by allowing me to serve on the board.

What is your role with NASFAA?

I have served on and chaired several different committees of NASFAA. Probably most notably from a PESC standpoint is the three years I was on the Technology Initiatives committee—winning “Committee of the Year” twice—that led to me being asked by Dr. Dallas Martin, president of NASFAA, to serve in his place on PESC’s board.

What should we all be paying more attention to?

We need to pay more attention to students’ needs and expectations. There is a lot of anecdotal evidence that we are more afraid of the technology than they are. However, we need to keep in mind that the core business of any school is to educate its students. Technology should be focused on that end. Beyond asking ourselves if we can meet any specific technological expectation, we should always ask if we should.

What can the community look forward to from your school and/or from NASFAA?

NASFAA will continue to meet its mission of maintaining its position as the leading authority on student financial aid. Therefore, NASFAA will continue to be involved in and work with its members on the development of standards that will lead to enhanced interoperability among all of the various systems we all use to administer billions of dollars in financial aid annually.

Federal Student Aid announced two Electronic Access Conferences (EACs). They will be held at the Manchester Grand Hyatt in San Diego October 30 to November 2 and at the Marriott Marquis in Atlanta November 29 to December 2, 2005. These conferences provide updates and training on FSA’s application, eligibility and delivery services and focus on issues related to the administration of Title IV programs. For current information on registration, sessions and agenda, visit www.ifap.ed.gov and click on FSA conferences in the left-hand column. No registration fees are required to attend this conference. Hotel and travel information is on the conference website.

The AACRAO 2005 Technology Conference will be held October 9-11 in conjunction with the PESC Workgroup Summit. Come early and learn how technology can be applied on the college campus in support of student services. For information about the program and to register, go to www.aacrao.org/tech05/index.htm.

A recent Chronicle of Higher Education article indicates that stu-
Students opt for traditional hard-copy text books, even when given an opportunity to purchase technologically advanced digital versions. Students are not necessarily avoiding the e-book technology, but are instead concerned about the stability of their own computer systems. The article quotes one student as saying, “With something this important, if my computer crashes then what do I do?”

MIT professors, technology and law experts are all debating the possible ramifications of legislation imposing new federal standards for drivers’ licenses. The Real ID Act of 2005, signed into law earlier this year, is aimed at making licenses more secure, but critics argue that it will turn licenses into national ID cards and thereby compromise civil liberties. The blog may be accessed at http://civics.typepad.com/realid/.

A recent Arizona Daily Star article explores the idea that online course tools may be exciting to professors and practical for most students, and asks are they deepening the social divide between those who own computers and those who don’t? If so, what can professors do to bridge the gap? The article cites the experiences of two students, one claiming she spends about 15 hours a week on public machines, and another saying he takes four three-hour trips to the labs each week. To read the article, visit http://www.dailystar.com/dailystar/dailystar/94132.php.

Secretary of Education, Margaret Spellings, recently announced the creation of a commission aimed at creating a national strategy for higher education, focused on rising enrollments, declining affordability and universities’ roles in the global economy. The head of the 19-member commission is Charles Miller, a former chairman of the University of Texas System’s Board of Regents. The commission will hold its first meeting in Washington in mid-October, followed by four others around the country. The panel must submit its final report to the secretary by August 1, 2006.

Researchers at Pennsylvania State University at University Park recently launched a free software, LionShare, aimed at turning peer-to-peer technology into a tool for professors to legitimately share large data sets, high-resolution images from their research, and other educational files, according to a Chronicle of Higher Education article.

Microsoft and eleven industry partners have submitted the Web Services for Management specification to the Distributed Management Task Force (DMTF) for further refinement and finalization as a Web services-based management standard. WS-Management describes a general SOAP-based protocol for managing systems such as PCs, servers, devices, Web services, and other manageable entities. For more information visit http://xml.coverpages.org/ni2005-09-17-a.html.

The National Research Center for College and University Admissions named Kentucky’s Transylvania University’s website the nation’s best for prospective students. Online forms and services, virtual campus tours, and good design, are what make an admission’s website according to the research center. For more information visit http://wiredcampus.chronicle.com/2005/09/winning_prospec.html.

As the controversy over office document formats heats up again this month as Microsoft and Massachusetts tangle over the state’s intention to standardize on the OpenOffice.org XML format, an InfoWorld article examines what we really need in office suite technology. The article may be accessed at http://www.infoworld.com/article/05/09/14/380Pstrategic_1.html.

Researchers at the University of California at Berkeley have demonstrated that the sound of computer keystrokes can reveal, with almost unerring accuracy, what is being typed, according to a Chronicle of Higher Education article. The researchers duplicated keystrokes using low-tech, inexpensive hardware. The article is available for subscribers only at www.chronicle.com.
While there is high interest in identity federation, the technology is still evolving and will likely be more expensive and time-consuming to implement now as opposed to a few years down the road, according to an InfoWorld article. Most of the current identity federations are based on Web services protocol developed by Liberty Alliance and OASIS. Both have worked together to develop SAML, although there have been complaints that the protocols are too specific. For more information, visit http://www.infoworld.com/article/05/09/15/ HNidfederation_1.html.

The Chronicle of Higher Education recently published an in-depth article on the important role the Internet played in the aftermath of Katrina, serving as a critical communication tool for colleges hit by the storm. Though campus networks at many colleges along the Gulf Coast remained offline because of storm damage, officials were able to activate off-campus websites that they had set up for emergency purposes and use those to keep students, faculty members, and others informed, according to the article. To read the article, see http://chronicle.com/free/2005/09/2005090901n.htm.

“At a time when the U.S. faces enormous challenges to its scientific and technological leadership, U.S. policy is headed in the wrong direction,” writes the Bay Area Science and Innovation Consortium, a group that includes college officials and representatives from companies like IBM and Hewlett-Packard. In a letter to John H. Marburger III, President Bush’s chief scientific adviser, the consortium argues that federal agencies like the U.S. Department of Defense are unwisely marginalizing IT research — by classifying too many scientific studies, focusing on short-term needs instead of loftier goals, and cutting grants to college computer-science programs, according to a Computing Research Policy Blog. To access the blog, visit http://www.cra.org/govaffairs/blog/index.php.

According to a recent National Center for Education Statistics report, postsecondary enrollment will continue to increase until at least 2014. Total enrollment is expected to climb 15 to 20 percent between 2002 and 2014. The largest increase by degree is a 32 percent increase in enrollment for first professional degrees. The report, “Projections of Education Statistics to 2014,” can be accessed at http://nces.ed.gov.

The National Archives and Records Administration has awarded a $308-million contract to the Lockheed Martin Corporation to build a computer system to preserve the federal government’s electronic records, according to the Chronicle. To access the article, visit http://chronicle.com/daily/2005/09/ 2005090901t.htm.

Three open-source projects are teaming up to create an alternative to software-integration products from IBM and other heavyweights. The partnership calls for close technical ties and code sharing among ServiceMix, Apache Synapse and Celtix, which is hosted at France-based consortium ObjectWeb. The goal of the planned alliance, the sources said, is to create a more cohesive integration offering and attract software developers in the increasingly cluttered field of open source. For more information, visit http://news.com.com/2100-7344_3-5844789.html.

A professor of physics at the California Institute of Technology indicates that physicists will be seeking to move as much as 10 petabytes of information — or 500 times the amount of data contained in the Library of Congress — every year. To help tackle this type of data transfer researchers are preparing to start a nationwide series of experiments designed to come up with a new approach to high-speed networking in academe, according to a Chronicle of Higher Education article. The result would be a faster, better academic arm of the Internet than Internet2’s existing network. Some networking experts in academe see the project, Hybrid Optical and Packet Infrastructure Testbed, or HOPI, as the blueprint for the next Internet.
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Michael Sessa
PESC Executive Director
202-293-7383

PESC Joins Multi-Industry Electronic Authentication Partnership

September 27, 2005 (Washington DC) ~ The Board of Directors of the Postsecondary Electronic Standards Council (PESC) is very pleased to announce that PESC has joined, as a full voting Member, the Electronic Authentication Partnership (EAP). The EAP is the multi-industry partnership working on the vital task of enabling interoperability among public and private electronic authentication systems. Interoperability of e-authentication systems is essential to the cost-effective operation of safe and secure systems that perform critical electronic transactions and tasks across industry lines.

In December 2002, Johns Hopkins University convened a symposium of experts from both the public and private sectors to examine the best approach for governing identity management. The symposium issued a paper calling for creation of a “Stakeholder Council” to develop operating rules on identity management. The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) provided further elaboration on the need for electronic authentication on an international scale. The efforts to organize continued and in December 2003, the first community meeting was held to begin the organization and formalization of this effort.

Now in 2005, the EAP is formally established as a 501(c)(3) non-profit membership-based association with Members that include PESC; the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators (AAMVA); BITS Financial Services Roundtable; the U.S. General Services Administration; Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS); Microsoft Corporation; Mortgage Bankers Association (MBA); the National Automated Clearinghouse Association (NACHA); the National Association of State Auditors, Comptrollers, and Treasurers (NASACT); and Wells Fargo, among many others.

The next meeting of the EAP is November 2, 2005 at the Microsoft Innovation and Technology Conference Center in Reston VA. At this meeting, elections for the Board of Directors and officers will take place during the EAP’s 1st Annual Membership Meeting.

For more information about the EAP, please visit www.EAPartnership.com. For more information on PESC, 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.
LOOKING AHEAD TO NOVEMBER – Please mark your calendar for the November meeting of the Electronic Authentication Partnership (EAP) on Wednesday, November 2, 2005 in Reston, Virginia. The EAP will meet from 8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. The meeting will take place at the following location:

Microsoft® Innovation & Technology Conference Center  
12012 Sunset Hills Road  
Reston, VA 20190  
(703) 673-7600

To allow us the opportunity to plan appropriately, please return the EAP meeting registration form to the NACHA office by Monday, October 31, 2005. Dress for the meeting is business casual.

This will be the second "Members Only" EAP meeting. This means that only dues-paying organizations may attend. If you would like information on joining the EAP or have any additional questions, please email Lisa Humphries at lhumphries@nacha.org.
Registration Form  
Wednesday, November 2, 2005  
8:30 A.M. – 3:00 P.M. EASTERN TIME  
Microsoft® Innovation & Technology Conference Center  
Reston, Virginia  

Please fill out the form below. If more than one person from your organization plans to attend, please have each person complete and forward the form. Thank you.

☐ I plan to attend.

Date: ____________________________
Name: __________________________________________________________
Title: ___________________________________________________________
Organization: _______________________________________________________
Address: __________________________________________________________________
City/ST/ZIP: __________________________________________________________________
Phone: ____________________________
Fax: ______________________________
E-mail: ____________________________

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM BY MONDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2005:
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