Postsecondary Electronic Standards Council
Education Record User Group
Notes from the April 24, 2012 Conference Call

On today's call were

Jeffrey Alderson, Director of Development, ConnectEDU, Inc. and Member of the PESC Board of Directors

Bob Hewett, Principal Software Engineer, Data Solutions, Pearson, and **Co-Chair of ERUG**

Scott Hillman, Retired VP, Operations & Customer Services, Parchment

Tom Stewart, Retired Registrar, Miami Dade College (FL) and Member of the AACRAO SPEEDE Committee

Romy Teh, VP, Program Management & Client Services, Xap Corporation

Bob started today's call at 3 minutes after the hour.

MyData Specification: Jeff Alderson from the PESC Board and from ConnectEDU had earlier suggested the potential use of MyData in our XML work in PESC. He joined us on today's call and briefed us on the initiative from the US White House and the US Department of Education (primarily Federal Student Aid) to place usable electronic student data in the hands of the students who can benefit from the use of their own data.

The MIME format and other ZIP formats, among others, were discussed briefly as a possible wrapper for the data.

The proposal now being discussed is focused on the products that might be made available from service providers.

The following is a brief dialog provided by Jeff Alderson in response to several questions from Bob Hewett:

> From Bob: Why would a university want to adopt this standard? They definitely wouldn't want to give it away for free.

> From Jeff: The White House is singularly focused on enabling learners to get access to and "unlock" their own data stored in various systems and services. This wouldn't be something for a University to adopt directly. Rather, this would be a service or feature of an existing product that a service provider such as College Board or ConnectEDU or an SIS/ERP vendor like Pearson or Oracle would provide. The goal here is to provide any data that a service provider collects on an individual learner back to the learner in an electronic format for the learner to take with them and do with the data as they wish.

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From Bob: There is no mention of security. Universities would be reluctant to deliver data to students that could easily be manipulated by any computer savvy college student. What precautions could be put in place to make sure the files could not be modified by the receiving party? Signing the bundle? Signed Zip files?

From Jeff: The assumption here is that the data in the files would be unencrypted and open, and would also be considered "unofficial." As the goal of this data payload is for the learner to take it with them and re-upload into another service provider, such as a service provided by ConnectEDU for college and career planning, the learner would not be helping themselves by manipulating the content of the data file. Also, for service providers that build interfaces to ingest this data, it would be done with the knowledge that the data is open and could have been modified, and would be properly flagged as "self-reported" by the student. This is not intended to be a replacement for existing, secure, records exchange networks.

From Bob: EDI is not listed as a standard and that is what most universities use. (I realize that the standard can easily support any text-based standard, but I thought I'd mention it).

From Jeff: As the goal of this project was learner-centric and not University focused, the conversation quickly turned to leveraging the most "modern" XML standards, as they would be the easiest to deploy by the service providers. I don't believe that the proposed solution would exclude the ability of EDI to be put into the multi-part wrapper, but XML was certainly the focus of the conversations.

From Bob: To answer your question, everyone thought that it is technically feasible, but there were concerns about giving text based standard data to students and whether a MIME based delivery system is the best delivery mechanism since it implies that some installed application would be needed to take advantage of the data.

From Jeff: The assumption is that it will be the responsibility of service providers to build products and services around this data payload, and provide added value services to individual learners that show up with the data in this format.

From Bob: Joseph Giroux was interested in this for the Portfolio work group.

From Jeff: Glad to hear it. I recommended that the emerging ePortfolio XML standard should be used/supported as modern portfolio and planning systems could use that standard to export all the individual learner data that is outside the scope of the traditional transcript. Everyone in this working group agreed, and was looking forward to seeing draft specifications.

Crosswalk Rule from PESC XML Transcripts to EDI TS130: Karen Lee from James Madison University in Virginia pointed out a discrepancy among these crosswalks for the use of the SCED code to identify the course content for high school courses. In several of the crosswalks, the SCED code is mapped to a REF segment and in others, it is mapped to a NTE segment. The AACRAO SPEEDE Committee discussed the issue on its last call and agreed the most appropriate mapping would be to a REF segment in the EDI TS130.

On today's call, ERUG agreed that mapping to a REF segment is a better fit.

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Tom will revise the mapping in the appropriate crosswalks, add a new tab for the affected crosswalks to point out the changes, and ask Michael Sessa to replace the affected crosswalks with the revised ones on the EDI and XML Crosswalks Page on the PESC.org web site.

Future PESC ERUG calls: Since Bob Hewett now has another commitment every other week at the time of our calls, we agreed to change from weekly calls to regular calls every other week.

Today's call ended at 35 minutes after the hour.

Next ERUG Conference Call is Tuesday, May 8, 2012 at noon Eastern (11 am Central, 10 am Mountain, and 9 am Pacific) Daylight Saving Time. Call 888.205.5513 and use participant code 952016#.

Next Face to Face Meeting of ERUG: PESC Spring 2012 Data Summit May 2 - 4, 2012 in Las Vegas at the Wynn | Encore Hotel. ERUG session is scheduled from 8:30 am to 10:15 am on Thursday, May 3 in the hotel's Alsace Room 2.