

# the Standard

news and commentary on standards and technology in postsecondary education

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## Year End Wrap Up

BY MICHAEL SESSA

With June 30 marking the end of the fiscal year for PESC, I thought it a good time to reflect on the past year and provide some thoughts and insight. For PESC specifically, this past year has been a busy one!

We've seen three new board members join in mid-year (Michael Berberet of NCS Pearson, Steve Biklen of NASLA, and Mark Jones of the National Student Clearinghouse), a new Executive Director, a new Membership Coordinator, the most widely attended XML Forum meetings and annual conference to date, and the

launching of two new workgroups (Web Services and Single Institutional ID).

These changes and events signify an interest, passion, and involvement of the higher education community in standards and data exchange and this is what truly motivates and invigorates me. It is exhilarating to see workgroups and committees spend meeting time discussing the details of issues, proposing solutions, analyzing problems.

At times, frustration comes into play

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## Hotel Available for Technology Summit

Hotel information is now available for PESC's Technology Summit being held October 21-22, 2003 in Austin, TX. The Summit kicks off on Tuesday afternoon October 21, 2003 at 1:30 pm with a general session open to all attendees. During Tuesday's general session, the draft Business Plan for the XML Forum, which will identify the overall purpose, policies, and procedures of the XML Forum, will be rolled out. Tuesday will also include a discussion on the launching of PESC's newest workgroup on Standard Student

Authentication and illustrations of Best Practices in Authentication in use in the community right now. Anyone interested in participating in the Standard Student Authentication workgroup should contact Michael Sessa, PESC Executive Director, at Sessa@StandardsCouncil.org or at 202-293-7383. The Summit continues with a full day on Wednesday October 22, 2003 whereby workgroups will meet for a full day to continue their work and update each other on signifi-

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# XML Postsecondary Transcript

Development of the XML Postsecondary Academic Transcript provides all the technological benefits of XML. Many other industries from finance, transportation, to insurance, also see the value in XML and are also launching XML data exchange solutions. As previously stated before in *the Standard*, PESC has coordinated and submitted the XML Postsecondary Transcript to ANSI ASC X12 for review; and members of Subcommittee A on Education Administration are busily working to morph the Transcript from its current design state to the design methodology stipulated by X12.

The challenge we face is that X12 has just recently drafted their design rules for XML and they are currently being fleshed out to ensure they accommodate the needs of many industries. This process requires additional time and pushes the approval of the XML Transcript into early 2004, at best. Regardless, representatives of Subcommittee A, SPEEDE, and PESC believe it important to follow this process through, and efforts continue to see this happen. When the ANSI ASC X12 XML Standard is produced, we can then make determinations on when and how migration toward that standard should happen.

To provide higher education with an XML solution for the Transcript in the meantime, Subcommittee A, SPEEDE and PESC have come to common agreement to release the XML Transcript in its current state as an industry standard. This way, a direction for the industry is provided, and the direction is on track with the national standard effort.

The preliminary timeline for release of the XML Postsecondary Academic Transcript as an industry standard is as follows:

- August 15, 2003—draft finalized and released for 45 days of public comment
- September 30, 2003—public comment period ends
- October 1-31, 2003—public comments reviewed and

adjustments made

- November 3, 2003—final publication

Representatives that administer the Internet Server at the University of Texas at Austin have agreed to accept and route this version of the XML Postsecondary Transcript. In an effort to administer migration to this standard and to monitor its usage, PESC will be tracking all organizations using this standard.

All information will be made available through future editions of *the Standard* and available on PESC's website at [www.StandardsCouncil.org](http://www.StandardsCouncil.org).

## Maintenance and Change Control of **Common Record: CommonLine**

Members of NCHELP's Electronic Standards Committee (ESC) and the US Department of Education's Office of Federal Student Aid (FSA) continue to work toward convergence with the Common Record, presently the data exchange protocol for interfacing with federally run programs.

The ESC, FSA, and PESC collaborated to develop applicable schemas for CommonLine and these schemas morph the Common Record into a new version for FSA, FFELP and alternative loans. The leadership of ESC and FSA continue to further strategize on the requirements for the maintenance and change control of those schemas. Once drafted, those procedures will be submitted to PESC for review and implementation. This process is critical to ensuring that issues raised by ESC and FSA that need to be addressed, corrected, and/or revised are identified, routed, analyzed, worked, and responded to a timely manner.

## New Members

PESC is pleased to welcome the following organizations to its membership effective July 1, 2003 for the 2003 – 2004 membership year!

### Access Group

PESC contact is Dan Lau, President and CEO  
[www.AccessGroup.org](http://www.AccessGroup.org)

### Iowa State University

PESC contact is Clare Smith-Larson, Systems Support, Office of the Registrar  
[www.IAstate.edu](http://www.IAstate.edu)

### Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority

PESC contact is Karen Haney, LPA Division Director  
[www.KHEAA.com](http://www.KHEAA.com)

### LoanStar Systems

PESC contact is Todd Turner, AVP of Industry Relations  
[www.LoanStar.com](http://www.LoanStar.com)

### Nelnet

PESC contact is Randy Mertens, Director of Marketing Research and Industry Relations  
[www.Nelnet.net](http://www.Nelnet.net)

### Susquehanna University

PESC contact is Roozbeh Tavakoli, Director of Information Technology  
[www.Susqu.edu](http://www.Susqu.edu)

### University of Oklahoma

PESC contact is Rick Skeel, Director of Academic Records  
[www.OU.edu](http://www.OU.edu)

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### Wrap Up, From Page 1

as negotiating solutions takes a lot of time, energy, and resources. But I do not believe that involved discussions about how to bring about the best solutions across higher education are a bad thing. It is quite amazing to have so many people analyzing business problems, talking about how to solve them, looking at issues from the customer service prospective, and picking apart technologies to determine if they are the best fit for the problem at hand. When so many people from all different organizations and backgrounds come together to focus on how to make things better, good things will happen!

Together, we've developed an XML schema for the Postsecondary Academic Transcript, that through careful planning and analysis makes

sense for those programming the transcript from scratch, and the way it was developed provides a solid bridge for those that might need to migrate from EDI to XML. The final release of the XML Postsecondary Schema is scheduled for November 2003 and marks the culmination of many months of planning and development (see the Transcript article on page 2).

Together, we've further developed the Common Record to now accommodate CommonLine for FFELP and Alternative Student Loans. Strategies and meetings are now being planned to address maintenance and change control of those schemas (see the article on Common Record: CommonLine page 2).

For the new year, we're already ramping up with seven new organizations joining PESC membership, the elec-

tion of two new board members (Dave Moldoff of SCT and Bob Morley of the University of Southern California and AACRAO), and the launching of our newest workgroup – Standard Student Authentication.

The challenges we all face with technology and interoperability can seem overwhelming. But we can work to find the best answers together. This was the mission of PESC in 1997 and it still holds true today. Join us as we tackle the future...good things are going to happen!



# Interview with Dallas Martin

*President and CEO, National Association of  
Student Financial Aid Administrators*

■ **What is NASFAA and what role does it play within the higher education community?**

The National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA) exists to promote the professional preparation, effectiveness, and mutual support of persons involved in student financial aid administration. The Association serves as a national forum and acts as a focus for the expression of views on matters relating to the development, funding, and administration of student financial aid. The Association encourages programs which remove financial barriers to student enrollment and retention, thereby assuring that any qualified student who desires an education can obtain sufficient resources to do so. The Association works cooperatively with others in the postsecondary education community who are concerned with the support and administration of student financial aid.

■ **How many members does the association have and what services does it provide to those members?**

Currently the Association has almost 3,100 postsecondary educational institutional members, as well as other affiliate, constituent, and student members who have an interest in the advancement of student aid.

Members receive many services including research publications, training materials and workshops, administrative guides, evaluation and compliance tools, and access to NASFAA's comprehensive web site, which publishes Today's News.

■ **What role within the association do you play? How many years have you served in this capacity?**

I serve as President and CEO of the Association. As such, I am responsible for the overall operation and staffing of the National Office, monitoring the fiscal affairs of the Association, and serving as the Association's primary liaison with the United States Congress, the Administration, all governmental departments, and other Educational Associations. I have served the Association in this capacity since December 1975.

■ **What are the main concerns of your members now and going forward?**

Clearly, the primary concern of our members is securing and maintaining adequate financial aid funding to insure that all qualified students who desire to pursue and complete a postsecondary education can do so, regardless of their financial status.

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Another major concern impacting our members is the nearly universal reduction in institutional operating budgets that impacts staffing, administration, and professional development budgets within the campus financial aid office. These cut-backs negatively affect overall operations, reduce services, and jeopardize quality control.

A final concern is getting policymakers to support legislative and regulatory changes that are needed to improve the various student aid programs, rather than imposing more unnecessary and burdensome requirements upon the total system.

### ■ What key observations have you made about higher education during the span of your career?

First, more people today—including elected officials—seem to ignore the wide range of societal benefits that are gained from insuring that all desiring and qualified citizens obtain a postsecondary education, regardless of their economic circumstances. Rather, they assume that the benefits only accrue to the individual, primarily helping the person to obtain a better job and to earn more money. As such, they are less willing to invest public tax revenues into higher education, particularly grant or other need-based programs.

Second, peoples' expectations about paying for higher education have changed. Overall, parents today are less willing to make the financial sacrifices to help pay for their children's postsecondary expenses, than their parents did for many of them. Furthermore, many affluent families

believe they are "entitled" to student aid, no-need scholarships, and tax credits because they argue "they have paid more than their share."

As a result of these latter two factors, over the past fifteen years there has been significant change in how scarce tax dollars are being allocated. Today, large amounts of public expenditures are used for political reasons to appease more affluent families. For the most part, these expenditures are diverting dollars from under-funded need-based student aid programs. This limits educational opportunity for many qualified financially needy students. If this pattern continues in the long-term, our nation's overall economic strength and security will not be achieved because of our unwise use of educational expenditures.

### ■ How have the issues changed and what role has technology played in these changes?

Student aid requirements and regulations have significantly increased over the past two decades, both in numbers and complexity. While various forms of technology have been developed to help address these issues, unfortunately many of these products, systems and processes have been designed in such a proprietary environment that they create major inconsistency within the total student aid delivery system.

### ■ What role do technology standards play in financial aid?

In today's ever changing environment, there are many emerging technologies, however if they are to be properly coordinated then it is essential that they all conform to an agreed upon set of common data standards, so as to assure

that each can interface and exchange data with the other. If coordinated properly, technology and data standards cannot only help everyone to improve their delivery and operations but will greatly save time and expenditures as well.

### ■ How has the function of financial aid administrator changed due to technology both day-to-day and in its role within the campus?

Technology has significantly changed how financial aid is delivered to students. Today, many students use the web to compare institutions, to apply for admission and financial aid, to receive and accept their aid package, to receive their loan entrance and exit counseling, to authorize payments and deposits, and to monitor all aspects of the financial aid process.

Technology also enables the financial aid administrator to perform many required administrative functions more easily and to provide students with improved services.

While there are many benefits to technology, there are other challenges to consider including:

Technology does not always result in savings of time or resources. In fact, installing, maintaining, operating, and updating institutional systems and software often requires more resources and yet such costs are seldom fully factored into the institution's overall budgetary planning and allocation processes.

Personnel who become dependent on automated systems frequently forget or never grasp the constructs that are at the foundation of the programs or for-



## Community Calendar

July 9-12	NASFAA Conference	Salt Lake City	<a href="http://www.nasfaa.org/subhomes/annualconference2003/home.html">http://www.nasfaa.org/subhomes/annualconference2003/home.html</a>
July 26-29	NACUBO Annual Meeting	Nashville	<a href="https://www.nacubo.org/annual_meeting/">https://www.nacubo.org/annual_meeting/</a>
August 14-15	ED FSA Software Developers Conference	Arlington	<a href="http://edeworkshop.ncspearson.com/welcome.htm">http://edeworkshop.ncspearson.com/welcome.htm</a>
September 28-October 3	ANSI ASC X12	San Diego	<a href="http://www.x12.org/x12org/meetings/x12trimt/index.cfm">http://www.x12.org/x12org/meetings/x12trimt/index.cfm</a>
October 1	ANSI Annual Conference	Washington DC	<a href="http://www.ansi.org/meetings_events/featured_events/wsw03/agenda03.aspx?menuid=8">http://www.ansi.org/meetings_events/featured_events/wsw03/agenda03.aspx?menuid=8</a>
October 20-21	AACRAO Technology Conference	Austin	<a href="http://www.aacrao.org/atc">http://www.aacrao.org/atc</a>
October 21-22	PESC Tech Summit	Austin	<a href="http://www.standardscouncil.org">http://www.standardscouncil.org</a>
November 2-5	ED FSA Electronic Access Conference	San Diego	<a href="http://edeworkshop.ncspearson.com/welcome.htm">http://edeworkshop.ncspearson.com/welcome.htm</a>
November 4-7	Educause Annual Conference	Anaheim	<a href="http://www.educause.edu/conference/annual/2003/">http://www.educause.edu/conference/annual/2003/</a>
November 9-12	AACRAO Annual Strategic Enrollment Management Conference	Boston	<a href="http://www.aacrao.org/sem13/index.htm">http://www.aacrao.org/sem13/index.htm</a>
December 2-5	ED FSA Electronic Access Conference	New Orleans	<a href="http://edeworkshop.ncspearson.com/welcome.htm">http://edeworkshop.ncspearson.com/welcome.htm</a>
December 3-5	CBA Student Lending Conference	Arlington	<a href="http://www.cbanet.org/conferences/student_lending/student_lending.html">http://www.cbanet.org/conferences/student_lending/student_lending.html</a>

### Interview, From Page 5

mulas being monitored. As such, they may not be able to explain to a parent why they have a certain calculated expected family contribution and instead respond simply by saying “that is what came out from the Education Department’s computer.”

Technology, if not used correctly, can limit institutional choices and create impersonal service. All too often, institutional personnel blame the “system” for why exceptions can not be made or why things cannot change. In reality, different choices can be made, but this

necessitates changes or work-arounds that people often do not want. It is easy to say to a student, “our system will not allow us to do that,” when the real answer might be, “that would require more work on my part.”

#### ■ *Can financial aid ever be totally paper free? What are the barriers?*

I do not envision that financial aid per se will be totally paper-free until everyone who is to be served by the system has an understanding of and reasonable access to automation. Unfortunately, there still exists a large digital divide in the United States and it

disproportionally impacts the very populations that federal student aid is designed to serve.

#### ■ *What is your vision for PESC in the future?*

My hope is that PESC will continue to be successful in fulfilling its mission to become the primary independent, neutral, third-party forum which assists everyone included in the higher education community in leveraging the value of electronic standards for data exchange that insure interoperability, improved service, and increased efficiency.

# World Standards Week

## September 29 to October 2

The U.S. standardization and conformity assessment community will celebrate World Standards Week 2003 with an exciting and varied mix of meetings, events and ceremonies to be held during the week of September 29-October 2 in Washington, DC.

On the evening of Tuesday, September 30th, from 5:30-9:30 pm, the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) will co-host the Standards Day Exhibition, Reception and Dinner at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. The International Code Council (ICC) is serving as the administering organization for this year's event. Additional information about this banquet will be provided as soon as it is available.

### What is World Standards Day?

World Standards Day, which will be celebrated this year on September 30th, began as a celebration of the birth of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), which held its first meeting in London on October 14, 1946. From an initial roster of 25 countries, ISO (based in Geneva, Switzerland) now has 123 member nations and has evolved into the global clearinghouse for all standards activities. ISO's U.S. representative, the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), is one of the founding organizations of World Standards Day. Today, World Standards Day is sponsored annually by ISO; the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), which develops international standards

for the electrical and electronics industries; and the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), an international organization responsible for the coordination, development, regulation, and standardization of telecommunications standards.

The goal of World Standards Day is to raise awareness of the importance of global standardization to the world economy and to promote its role in helping meet the needs of business, industry, government, and consumers worldwide. The international event pays tribute to the thousands of volunteers around the world who participate in standardization activities. Since its initial celebration in 1970, member countries commemorate World Standards Day by organizing special gatherings and events, ranging from conferences, exhibitions, and seminars to film shows, TV and radio interviews, and full "standards weeks" around mid October.

### How Will the U.S. Mark This Day?

At a special U.S. World Standards Day reception and dinner, to be held in Washington D.C., the winners of the Ronald Brown Standards Leadership Award and the World Standards Day Paper Contest will be announced. Named after the late U.S. Secretary of Commerce, the Ronald Brown Standards Leadership Award recognizes demonstrated leadership in promoting the important role of standardization in eliminating global barriers to trade. The World Standards Day Paper Contest is designed to raise

awareness of the importance of standards, as well as present various perspectives on national and international standards issues.

### Who Sponsors World Standards Day in the U.S.?

In the U.S., World Standards Day is a joint effort between the private and public sector. This year's World Standards Day events are being coordinated and funded by the World Standards Day Committee, consisting of representatives from more than 50 major companies, professional and technical societies, trade associations, standards developing organizations and government agencies. The co-chairs of the World Standards Day Committee are the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST).

### Why is U.S. Recognition of World Standards Day Important?

World Standards Day presents the American business community with an opportunity to demonstrate its commitment to the important role standards play in increasing U.S. competitiveness. In today's changing economy, industry, government, standards developing organizations, and other groups need to work together to ensure that U.S. products and services are accepted in the global marketplace, thereby enhancing U.S. leadership abroad. World Standards Day provides the U.S. with the forum to build on such relationships.

# Technology Tidbits

## *and Standards Snippets*

■ **The Liberty Alliance released Phase 2 of its draft identity-based web services specifications** last month. This phase of the specifications builds on the Phase 1 specifications, better known as Liberty Identity Federation Framework, which were released nearly a year ago. The specification seeks to build and manage identity-based web services, and this

release also allows the user to create a simplified sign-on to be used for a group of affiliated sites. In addition, Phase 2 will enable a service to maintain the anonymity of a user by validating the user without the need to know the user's identity.

■ The 30-day public review period for **OASIS' Version 1.1 Committee Specifications for the Security Assertion Markup Language (SAML)** will conclude on June 30. The V1.1 release includes the SAML XML Assertion and Protocol Schemas, along with a five-part prose documentation: "Assertions and Protocol", "Bindings and Profiles", "Security and Privacy Considerations", "Conformance Program Specification", and "Glossary". An overview of SAML and the specification documents may be accessed at <http://xml.coverpages.org/ni2003-05-27-b.html>

■ With numerous standards bodies working simultaneously interoperability, **Consortiuminfo.org recently interviewed representatives of OASIS, W3C, and the Web Services Interoperability Organization, allowing each organization** the opportunity to present its own role, and the role of other bodies, in the setting and support of web services standards. The respondents' answers are not always comparable, making the entire interview well rounded with varying opinions. The interview may be accessed at <http://consortiuminfo.org/bulletins/may03.php#featured>

### UT Austin Internet Server 'SPEEDEs' Along

May 2003 volume included:

- 56,318 TS130 transcripts  
*Highest volume ever in the month of May*
- 44,834 TS131 acknowledgements
- 4,757 TS997 Functional acknowledgements
- 17,502 TS189 Admission Applications
- 9,481 TS138 test score reports
- 145,073 total transactions
- 120 entities sent transcripts (plus about 300 Florida schools not counted as separate entities.)  
*This is an all time high*
- 185 entities received transcripts (same qualifier as above.)  
*This is an all time high*



■ **W3C released Version 1.2 of the SOAP specification** on Tuesday, June 23. The specification features improvements such as better error handling and internationalization, an upgraded processing model, and alignment with the W3C Web architecture. Major vendors, including IBM, Microsoft, Oracle, and Sun Microsystems, are backing the specification.

■ **The W3C Web Services Description Working Group has published an initial public working draft specification for Web Services Description Language (WSDL) Version 1.2 Part 2:**

*Message Patterns*, along with updated WDs for *Web Services Description Language (WSDL) Version 1.2 Part 1: Core Language* and *Web Services Description Language (WSDL) Version 1.2 Part 3: Bindings*. WSDL is described by the consortium as “an XML format for describing network services as a set of endpoints operating on messages containing either document-oriented or procedure-oriented information.”

■ **A Public Review Draft was issued for Java XML Digital Signature API Specification** on under the Java

Community Process. The purpose of the specification is “to define a standard Java API for parsing, generating, and validating XML signatures.” The API consists of five packages that support a DOM-independent implementation of *XML-Signature Syntax and Processing* and related W3C Recommendations.

■ **The Anti-Spam Research Group (ASRG), which is affiliated with the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF), the group that sets the standards for the fundamental technologies that make the Internet possible is working on a plan to end spam.** Initial technologies are being deployed within months, and other key technologies are being deployed in one to two years. Within two years, ASRG chairman Paul Judge said he expects to see the proposed “consent-based communications framework” in place for e-mail. Among the technologies being standardized by the ASRG are: Simple authentication technology for e-mail; “Trusted sender” technology; and Reputation systems to allow everyone on the Internet to cooperate in identifying good and bad e-mail senders among others.

## Summit, From Page 1

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cant progress.

PESC is pleased to bring the Technology Summit to the higher education community free of charge. As space is limited, registration will be required. And while breakfasts and dinners will be on your own, PESC will sponsor a lunch on Wednesday for all attendees. The Technology Summit takes place at the Radisson Hotel & Suites, 111 East Cesar Chavez Street, Austin, TX 78701, (512) 478-9611, [www.RadissonAustin.com](http://www.RadissonAustin.com). The rate is \$95 per night and the cut-off date to receive this rate is September 17, 2003. On-line registration will be made available shortly...stay tuned!

## Week, From Page 7

### What is the American National Standards Institute (ANSI)?

ANSI is a private nonprofit membership organization that coordinates the U.S. voluntary standards system, bringing together interests from the private and public sectors to develop voluntary standards for a wide array of U.S. industries. The Institute’s membership includes approximately 1,100 national and international companies, government agencies, and professional, technical, trade, labor, and consumer

organizations. ANSI is the official U.S. member body to the world’s leading standards bodies – the ISO and the IEC via the U.S. National Committee.

### What is the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)?

NIST is a non-regulatory agency in the U.S. Department of Commerce’s Technology Administration. Formerly known as the National Bureau of Standards, NIST promotes economic growth by working with industry to develop and apply technology, measurement, and standards.

For information on sponsorship and questions on World Standards Week activities, contact ANSI’s Education and Training Services:  
tel:212.642.4976  
e-mail: [training@ansi.org](mailto:training@ansi.org).

To register, please contact ANSI’s membership services staff:  
tel:212.642.4926  
fax:212.398.0023  
e-mail: [membership@ansi.org](mailto:membership@ansi.org)  
(Package registration discounts will be available).

—Source: ANSI website