

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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

NCHELP's ESC Awarded 1st Place for "CRC" Beta Test in PESC Annual Best Practices Competition

SunGard Higher Education's Ed Hauser, Sallie Mae's Keith Riccitelli, and AACRAO SPEEDE's Tom Stewart Honored with Distinguished Service Awards

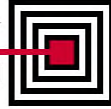
May 11, 2006 (*Washington DC*) ~ The Postsecondary Electronic Standards Council (PESC) announced the National Council of Higher Education Loan Program's (NCHELP) Electronic Standards Committee (ESC) Winner of the 2005 PESC Best Practices Competition for its submission, the *Common Record: CommonLine ("CRC") Beta Test*, at the 3rd Annual Conference on Technology and Standards held May 1-3, 2006 in Washington, D.C. The Best Practices Competition, now in its 7th year, is held by PESC to promote innovation and ingenuity in the application of standards for business needs.

In the spring of 2005, the ESC conducted a controlled Beta Test to exercise the version 1.0.6 of CRC documentation and version 1.0.2 of the XML schema to accelerate the discovery of issues in the standard as documented thereby allowing faster stabilization of the standard than would otherwise result from slow progressive testing by trading partners. Faster stabilization of the standard would promote its acceptance within the community and remove a barrier to its adoption. Seven industry partners volunteered, committing the time and resources to the projected 12-week testing and administration effort.



Co-Chairs of NCHELP's ESC Brian Allison of USA Funds (left) and Bob King of Citibank (center) are congratulated by Pete Nalli of Datatel (right) and Chair of PESC's Board of Directors with a 1st Place Award in PESC's Annual Best Practices Competition.

Test partner organizations included AES, ASA, Nelnet, Sallie Mae, Sigma Systems, USA Funds, and US Bank with additional support from AES, Citibank, Great Lakes, and NCHELP. The efforts of conducting the Beta Test resulted in significant improvements that will benefit the student loan industry in implementing CRC. CRC, a PESC approved national standard, is expected to support \$40+ billion in annual student loan volume.



The winning submission from NCHelp ESC along with all past winners of Best Practices is available at <http://www.PESC.org/Events/Best-Practices.asp>.

PESC also honored Ed Hauser of SunGard Higher Education, Keith Riccitelli of Sallie Mae, and Tom Stewart of AACRAO's SPEEDE Committee with Distinguished Service Awards. Mr. Hauser, an active member of the Steering Committee of the PESC Standards Forum for Education, served as its Chair from 2002 – 2005. Mr. Riccitelli served as Chair of the PESC Board of Directors from 2000 – 2005. Mr. Stewart has served in a number of roles, most recently as Co-Chair of the High School XML Transcript Workgroup. All have been instrumental in helping PESC and the education community reach its goal of interoperability. All past recipients of PESC's Distinguished Service Awards are available at <http://www.PESC.org/About/Service-Awards.asp>.



Tom Stewart of AACRAO's SPEEDE Committee (left), Keith Riccitelli of Sallie Mae (center left), and Ed Hauser of SunGard Higher Education (center right) are congratulated by Pete Nalli of Datatel (right) and Chair of PESC's Board of Directors with Distinguished Service Awards.

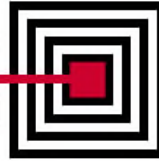
All awards were presented during the Opening Session of the 3rd Annual Conference on Technology and Standards, held May 1 – 3, 2006 in Washington DC. For more information, please visit www.PESC.org.

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.

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POSTSECONDARY
Electronic Standards Council



April 5, 2005

Mr. Brian Allison
Manager, Technology and Industry Initiatives
USA Funds
Co-Chair, Electronic Standards Committee

Mr. Robert L. King
Director, Industry Initiatives
Citibank Student Loan Corp.
Co-Chair, Electronic Standards Committee

c/o NCHELP
1100 Connecticut Avenue NW
12th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20036

Dear Mr. Allison and Mr. King:

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Postsecondary Electronic Standards Council (PESC), I am very pleased to inform you that the Electronic Standards Committee is being awarded Winner of PESC's 2005 Best Practices Competition! Our Board Review Committee was pleased with your submission on the Common Record: CommonLine (CRC) Beta Test Initiative and grateful to you for taking the time to pull together all the necessary documentation.

To ensure you are aware of events and activities, please note the following:

- The official announcement and award will be made by PESC during the opening general session at the 3rd Annual Conference on Technology and Standards on the morning of May 1 immediately following the welcome address. We request that you not disclose receipt of this award (i.e. *please keep it secret*) until the presentation is made. As we discussed, you will be present to receive the award on ESC's behalf.
- As an award winner, you are offered the opportunity to present your submission during a concurrent session at the conference, which is already in place for that purpose.
- A press release will be issued immediately following the conference announcing the winner and your submission will be posted on PESC's website.

Thank you to you and the entire ESC for continuing to provide valuable services to the education community, and congratulations!

Best Regards,

Michael Sessa

Michael D. Sessa
Executive Director

cc: PESC Board of Directors

2005-2006 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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(AACRAO)

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Michael Sessa

From: King, Robert L <robert.l.king@citigroup.com>
Sent: Monday, January 30, 2006 12:06 PM
To: Sessa, Michael
Cc: ballison@USAFUNDS.ORG; mputman@NCHELP.ORG
Subject: Submission for the PESC Best Practices Award
Attachments: CRC Beta Presentation--Final[1].ppt; Beta Test Doc.doc; Copy of CRC Industry Testing Functions Matrix0614.xls; CLOSED BETA TEST ISSUES AS OF 090605.doc

Michael Sessa, Executive Director

Postsecondary Electronics Standards Council

One Dupont Circle

Washington, DC

January 30, 2006

Dear Michael,

Please accept this letter as an official submission of the Common Record: CommonLine (CRC) Beta Test effort for the 2006 PESC Best Practices Competition. We are pleased to submit this letter on behalf of the CRC Beta Test team that was composed of volunteer participants from both the Student Loan industry and the Electronic Standards Committee's (ESC's) membership community.

In spring, 2005, the ESC recommended that its members conduct a controlled Beta Test to exercise the version 1.0.6 CRC documentation and version 1.0.2 of the schema to accelerate the discovery of issues in the standard as documented thereby allowing faster stabilization of the standard than would otherwise result from slow progressive testing by trading partners. Faster stabilization of the standard would promote its acceptance within the community and remove a barrier to its adoption.

Seven industry partners volunteered, committing the time and resources to the projected 12-week testing and administration effort. Test partner organizations included Sigma Systems, AES, USA Funds, US Bank, Nelnet, ASA and Sallie Mae, with additional support from Great Lakes, AES, Citibank and NCHELP. The CRC Beta Test effort began in April, 2005, with organizational planning. The team identified four objectives for the Beta Test effort:

- identify errors, inconsistencies and ambiguities
- resolve issues and update documentation
- recommend production versions of the documentation, schema and CRC testing tool
- perform integrated testing among participants and confirm participants' CRC systems.

Without the luxury of a fulltime project manager for the effort, the participants collaborated to perform project planning, and followed the plan to accomplish all facets of project execution. Communication and project management were accomplished via daily conference calls attended by all participants and support personnel. This collaboration resulted in the production of daily agendas, call minutes, documentation and escalation of issues to the appropriate committees for resolution, and tracking of Beta Test progress and results, available to all participants via the ESC Sharepoint site at NCHELP.org. The CRC Beta Test group began CRC document exchanges on July 7, 2005, and completed the monitored effort on October 30, 2005. The effort encompassed 461 document exchanges, 1,202 successfully completed test scenarios, and identified 78 issues. These 78 issues resulted in 31 updates to the Implementation Guide, 29 updates to the CRC Testing Tool, and 1 change to the Schema. The changes were vetted through weekly meetings of the ESC Origination Standards Advisory Team and in one community call with software vendors. The ESC approved adoption of

the 1.1 version of CRC officially accepted the Beta Test results and established that version of the schema and documentation and test tool as the baseline versions for Common Record: CommonLine implementations.

We recommend the CRC Beta Test effort for the PESC Best Practices award for the collaboration and teamwork that resulted in an industry-wide exercise of the Common Record CommonLine schema, documentation and testing tool and resulted in improvements that will benefit the student loan industry in implementing the Common Record CommonLine.

Attachments accompanying this submission include:

- a presentation that described and summarized the Beta Test and its results
- The Beta Test document that defined the structure of the test
- A document that showed participant readiness for the test
- A September vintage document of closed issues

Thank you for your consideration of this submission for the PESC Best Practices Award. Please do not hesitate to contact us for more information as needed.

Brian Allison and Bob King

Co-chairs, NCHelp Electronic Standards Committee

<<CRC Beta Presentation--Final[1].ppt>> <<Beta Test Doc.doc>> <<Copy of CRC Industry Testing Functions Matrix0614.xls>> <<CLOSED BETA TEST ISSUES AS OF 090605.doc>>

Robert L. King

Director, Industry Initiatives

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CommonRecord: CommonLine



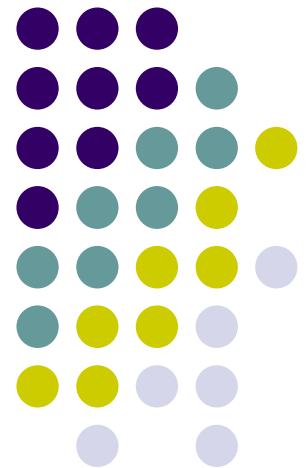
Industry Beta Test:

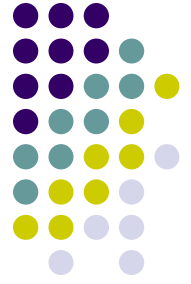
Overview

Presented by

Kim Shiflette, USA Funds

Bob King, Citibank

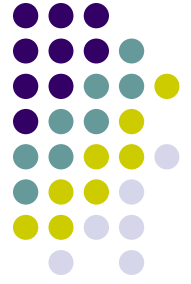




Session Overview

- Background
- Beta Test Participants
- Beta Test Planning
- Testing Scenarios
- Issues Identified
- Lessons Learned
- Beta Test Conclusions
- Questions

Background Information



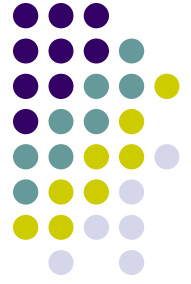
- CRC Version 1.06 was established as production version in Jan 05
- ESC concerned version not stable due to lack of implementation and trading partner testing
- ESC requested a controlled Beta Test with industry participants
- Request made to ESC members for volunteers
- Participants required to commit dedicated business and IT staff during test



Beta Test Participants

- Sigma – Cheryl Roy and Cliff Clevenger
- AES
 - Guaranty system – Jessica Fuhrman, Ben Clough and April Schaeffer
 - Loan Originations – Angie Enders and Jen Dixon
 - SBS – Darwin Peiffer and Tim Wenger
- USA Funds – Kim Shiflette and Bill Gibson
- ASA – John Duncan and Vincent Lee
- US Bank – Tawnie Kelly, Vicki Codd

Beta Test Participants – cont.

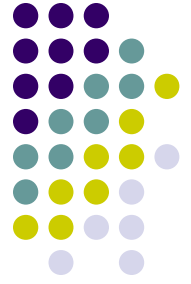


- Sallie Mae
 - Loan Originations – Bill Gibson, Robyn Hughes
 - SBS – Sandi Ford
- Nelnet – Arthur Edmonds, Randy Mertens and Nancy Dowling

Beta Test Supporters

- Great Lakes – Kristi Blabaum
- Citibank – Bob King
- NCHELP – Mark Putman
- AES – Terri Slocomb

Beta Test Planning

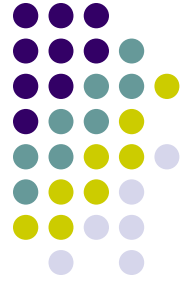


- Beta Test Objectives
 - Identify errors, inconsistencies and ambiguities
 - Solve issues and update documentation
 - Publish production version documentation, testing tool and schemas
 - Perform integrated testing with trading partners and confirm their systems

Beta Test Planning



- Dependencies
 - Develop Testing Function Matrix:
 - Documents ready to test
 - Loan programs supported
 - Processing types supported
 - Other services supported



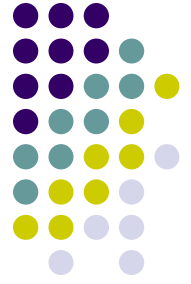
Beta Test Planning

- Preparations
 - Prepare test scenarios based on 'Testing Functions Matrix' with participants and dates
 - Prepare test scripts based on test scenarios:
 - Determine beta test SSNs, lender, guarantor and school id combinations and setup on participants' systems
 - Develop internal test scripts
 - Develop a master contact list - phone, e-mail, secondary contact, etc.



Beta Test Planning

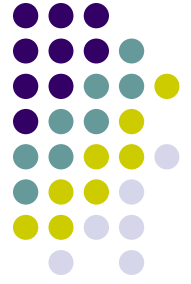
- Preparations – cont.
 - Develop secured Share Point to exchange documents
 - Document success and failure criteria:
 - Failure, including recommendation which follows the ‘Issue Resolution Process’
 - Document successful test results for group distribution



Beta Test Planning

- Issue Documentation Process
 - Develop “Beta Test” category to track issues through the NCHELP website
 - Issue Escalation Process
 - Log all issues – documentation, testing tool, schema, interpretation differences
 - Discuss on daily calls and resolve
 - Forward to OSAT, Testing and Cert or PESC Change Control Board (schema or core components), as needed
 - Beta participants’ system issues resolved internally

Testing Scenarios



- Testing Approach
 - Testing performed in sequence of life of the loan
 - Participants pre-determined what functions they would support – Send or Receive
 - Sender responsible for performing testing tool validation for all documents
 - Testing schedule allowed for 13 weeks of testing
 - Week one utilized for setup



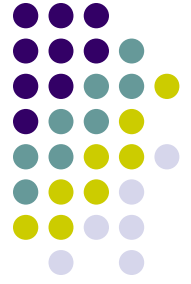
Testing Scenarios

- Weeks 2 and 3 - Certification and New Loan Request
 - Certification Requests
 - Stafford
 - PLUS
 - Alternative
 - Loan Requests - Combined and Individual Stafford, PLUS and Alternative loan requests for Lender and Guarantor flow
 - GO and GP
 - PG and PO
 - CO and CP
 - CR



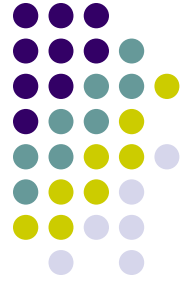
Testing Scenarios

- Week 4 – Used to clean up setup issues
- Week 5 – Pre-guarantee Corrections to Stafford, PLUS and Alternative Loans
 - Student data (including financial data)
 - Loan data
 - Award data
 - Disbursement data
 - Borrower data
 - Co-signer data
 - Terminate and Reprint Requests



Testing Scenarios

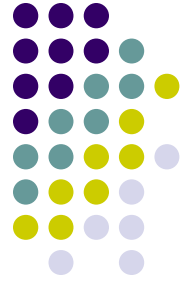
- Weeks 6 and 7 – Post Guarantee Changes: Person and loan level
 - Student
 - Address, Phone and E-mail
 - Borrower
 - Address, Phone and E-mail
 - Loan level
 - Student Level Code (grade level)
 - Financial Award Period Change (loan period)
 - Graduation Date Change
 - Guarantee Increase
 - Loan Reallocation



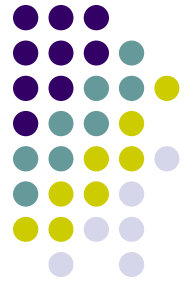
Testing Scenarios

- Weeks 8 and 9 – Post Guarantee Changes: Pre-Disbursement
 - Disbursement level
 - Disbursement Date Change
 - Full and Partial Disbursement Cancellation
 - Full and Partial Disbursement Increase
 - Full and Partial Disbursement Reinstatement
 - Add a Disbursement
 - Hold and Release Change

Testing Scenarios

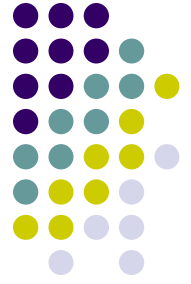


- Weeks 10 and 11 – Disbursement processing
 - Disbursement Roster
 - Disbursement Forecast Exchange



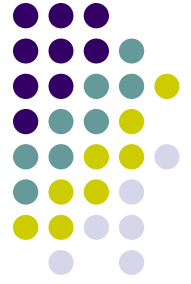
Testing Scenarios

- Weeks 12 and 13 – Post Guarantee Changes: Post-Disbursement
 - Full and Partial Disbursement Cancellation
 - Reinstatement
 - Full and Partial Reissue
 - Post Withdrawal (return to lender)
 - Post Withdrawal Correction (return to school)



Issues Identified

- Issue Types
 - Questions
 - Documentation
 - Clarification/Requirement Change
 - Testing Tool
 - Clarification/Requirement Change
 - Schema
 - Clarification/Requirement Change

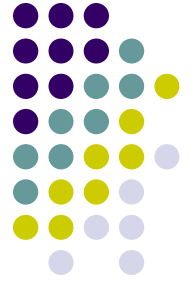


Issues Highlights

Total of **78** issues identified

- 31 Implementation Guide
- 29 Testing Tool
- 1 Schema modification
- 7 PESC Change Control Board
 - Guidance, R and R, or instance document
- 8 questions (How to's)
- 2 withdrawn

Issues Highlights



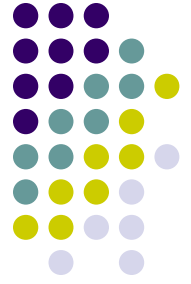
- Major Findings
 - EOL – EOL markers not readable or placed in wrong location
 - Updated documentation to ensure sender properly formats the EOL marker
 - Namespace – Name will not validate in the testing tool
 - Updated Testing Tool and Implementation guide to reflect correct naming convention for document type “name space”



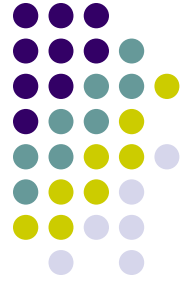
Issues Highlights

- Major Findings – cont.
 - Empty Tag or 0 filled tags – empty or zero filled tags in “Snapshot” response (returning zeros in EFC, ECA or <LenderApprovedAmount> when it is not provided)
 - Updated Implementation guide to not return empty or zero field tags
 - Unique Data – unique data not recognized by schema
 - Updated documentation to specify <UniqueData> requires subsequent tag with a namespace declaration

Issues Highlights

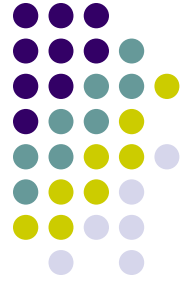


- Major Findings – cont.
 - Certification Request – Loan Request required fields for CR processing type code that were optional in the Certification layout
 - Updated documentation to make all Optional fields in CR layout optional in the Loan Request layout when the <ProcessingTypeCode> is CR (schools response to Certification)



Issues Highlights

- Major Findings – cont.
 - <SchoolNoteMessage> Sub and Unsub – sending back the same note message for the Sub and Unsub when different notes provided
 - Clarified in layouts this must be maintained at the Award (loan) level and may contain differing information between the Sub and Unsub
 - Post-Guarantee Demographic Response Documents - updates not reflected in response but block is accepted
 - Updated documentation to reflect demographic changes are not responded to and response documents may or may not include the requested changes



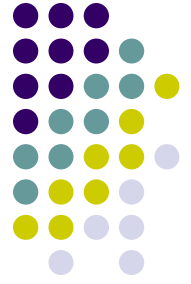
Issues Highlights

- Major Findings – cont.
 - Differing Rejected Response format:
 - Propagating same message but different error field
 - Propagating different message but same error field
 - Blocks “rejected” not relevant to the change
(employment data for a post guarantee change)
 - Block “accepted” but no data was processed
 - Block “rejected” all data was accepted but one element
 - Block “rejected” no data was accepted and only one element reported in error
 - Modified documentation to reflect standard method to report rejected information and developed new error to indicate entire block not processed



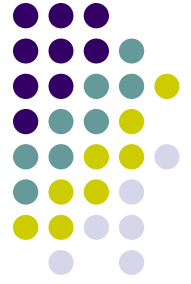
Issues Highlights

- Major Findings – cont.
 - Change function rejected because SP can not support function in an automated manner or must forward for approval
 - Modified implementation guide to support two new error codes to allow SP to notify requestor
 - Change will be processed manually (response type equals pended)
 - Change will be forwarded to another organization (response type equals forwarded)



Issues Highlights

- Honorable Mention – Issues identified outside the Beta Test
 - Schema values and field lengths do not match the implementation guide
 - The documentation provides additional restrictions based on our industry business and legacy system needs
 - Schema has <ResponseType> value of “Forwarding”, documentation has Forwarded
 - Schema updated to include both values – minor version change
 - Examples of <ResponseMessage> text in the Implementation Guide differs from the Error Code Appendix Description
 - <ResponseMessage> may contain free form text or the text as defined in the Error Code Appendix



Lessons Learned

- Testing tool extremely helpful when trading documents
 - Run with schema validation
- Must have dedicated resources and plan on additional time to resolve internal system issues
- Must read the up front material and layout from both the implementation guide and testing tool
- Strongly suggest entities perform first test with Beta participants
- Utilize the Issue Log process to answer questions
- Establish ground rules for trading documents



Lessons Learned – cont.

- Strongly recommend schools and SIS vendors test all supported function with Service Providers
- Strongly recommended business analyst and developers engage in discussions with their trading partners during development

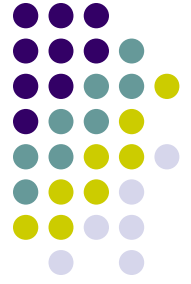
“ Having access to people who have a thorough understanding of the business processing is key to a successful implementation of CRC and I recommend that schools and FAMS vendors include their technical staff in all stages of planning, development and testing. “ - Cheryl Roy, Senior Systems Analyst, Sigma Systems, Inc

Complete list will be available on the share point



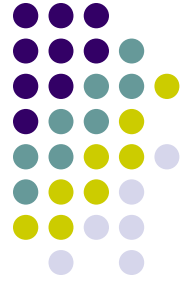
Conclusions

- Total of **461** Documents Traded
 - **186** Loan request traded – terminates, reprints, corrections, certifications and new loan requests
 - **51** Post guarantee documents traded
 - **207** Response documents traded
 - **17** Disbursement documents traded
- **1,202** Test Scenarios successfully completed to date!



Conclusions – cont.

- Beta Test participants continue to trade documents to complete test scenarios
 - Disbursement Acknowledgement
 - Rejected Responses
 - <ModificationAfterGuarantee> Response Type
 - Full and Standard Response Format
- Documentation, Testing Tool and Schema successfully supported the CRC functions tested



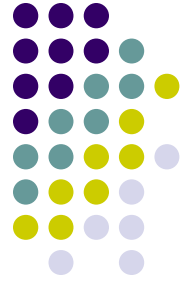
Conclusions – cont.

- Beta Test team recommends Implementation Guide, Testing Tool and Schemas 1.1.0 should be the base for development
- Industry Beta Test participants agree unanimously test was extremely beneficial

“Many times the programmer has no understanding of the business processing or unrestricted access to those who do. Participating in the CRC beta test has given me the opportunity to 'pick the brains' of some of the most knowledgeable people in the industry.” - Cheryl Roy, Senior Systems Analyst, Sigma Systems, Inc

INDUSTRY BETA TEST WAS A SUCCESS!

Questions



Thank you for your time

We welcome any questions or feedback