

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Executive Director Appointed to Negotiated Rulemaking Committee**

DEAC is pleased to announce that Dr. Leah Matthews, DEAC's Executive Director, has been appointed to serve as a member of the U.S. Department of Education's Distance Learning and Educational Innovation Subcommittee. Dr. Matthews will serve as a primary negotiator representing accrediting organizations.

The topics that the Subcommittee will likely address for distance education include simplification of State authorization requirements related to programs offered through distance education or correspondence courses and the definition of "regular and substantive interaction." Topics related to innovation include the definition of the term "credit hour;" the requirement that an institution demonstrates a reasonable relation between the length of a program and entry-level requirements for the recognized occupation for which the program prepares the student; direct assessment programs and competency-based education. The Subcommittee will focus on the ability of institutions to develop, and students to progress through, innovative programs responsive to student, employer and societal needs including consideration of regulations that are barriers to implementation of such programs.

"I am honored to have been chosen to participate in the negotiated rulemaking process," Dr. Matthews said. "The DEAC is intimately familiar with many of these issues and I look forward to engaging in a thoughtful and collaborative effort and to keeping the focus of discussion on education quality for students."

Negotiated rulemaking is a process used by federal agencies such as the Department of Education to negotiate the terms and final language used in regulations under revision. Dr. Matthews previously participated as a primary negotiator during the 2014 program integrity and improvement rulemaking sessions that addressed state authorization for programs offered through distance education or correspondence education.

### **ABOUT DEAC**

The Distance Education Accrediting Commission is a private, nonprofit organization founded in 1926 that operates as a national accreditor of distance education institutions. DEAC's goal is to ensure a high standard of educational quality in the distance education institutions it accredits and a quality education for the students who study at its accredited institutions.

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