

Credentials Solutions Asserts its Commitment to the Open Exchange of Electronic Student Records

/EINPresswire.com/ Thomas McKechney, CEO of [Credentials](#) Inc. gives stance on the SPEEDE Server

[Credentials Solutions](#) is a service company, owned and operated by its founding partners since 1997 for the purpose of re-engineering transactional processes that transform the student experience while delivering game changing operational efficiencies to student records operations at colleges and universities. Relying on the founders' many years of experience in the financial services industry, Credentials has applied proven techniques and new technologies to introduce many innovations that have since been embraced as "best practices" in the student records industry. Credentials invented the practice of online degree verifications (1998), introduced a revenue sharing model for verifications (1998), developed "touchless" transcript order processing (2003), integrated FedEx delivery and tracking of transcripts (2006), and announced "touchless" electronic transcript extraction and delivery (2007). Since introducing [TranscriptsPlus®](#) in 2001, Credentials Solutions has been joined by other service providers in the transcript marketplace – Docufide and Avow (Parchment), Scrip-Safe, National Student Clearinghouse, ConnectEdu, Pearson and XAP. Each of these firms has brought new ideas, technologies and services which have contributed to the dramatic growth in the sending and receiving of electronic transcripts. Credentials Solutions currently provides transcript services to more than 175 colleges and universities representing an aggregate enrollment of more than 3 million students.



As service providers, all of the aforementioned firms rely on the industry to provide standards for student privacy, data security, data formatting and data exchange protocols. Further, we have all relied upon the University of Texas at Austin for access to the national "hub" known as the SPEEDE Server. We appreciate the tremendous contribution made over the years by AACRAO, PESC and the University of Texas as they have provided an external environment that has been stable and predictable.....a level playing field.

The recent announcement that the SPEEDE Server will be transferred from the University of Texas at Austin to the National Student Clearinghouse has introduced uncertainty into what had been a stable and predictable external environment. While we agree with the University's

decision to transfer the operations and development of the Server, we are deeply concerned with their choice of National Student Clearinghouse as the future operator. Our reason for concern is obvious. National Student Clearinghouse is an aggressive competitor in the transcript services marketplace. Their common practice of packaging access to services to one another, bundling, raises the specter of an unlevel playing field. The SPEEDE Server has been considered a “trusted network” in that all participants are known and vetted. Further, as a prominent Institution that invested its own resources for the betterment of the entire community, the University of Texas could be “trusted” to operate and develop the Server without any conflict of interest. The door has always been open at the University of Texas for our input, questions and concerns. As previously stated, our primary concern with the transfer of the SPEEDE Server to NSC is the fundamental conflict of interest posed by the fact that the Clearinghouse competes in the transcript services market. Under the proposed arrangement, Credentials has no rights, no financial responsibilities and no oversight of policies, procedures or development of a Server operated by the National Student Clearinghouse. Consequently, the trusted network formerly known as the “Texas Server” is no longer trustworthy.

On behalf of our institutional client base and their 3 million students and in harmony with our colleagues at Parchment and Scrip-Safe, we urge the industry to consider the following principles which are intended to promote the accelerating growth and open exchange of electronic records while encouraging continued innovation and creativity amongst postsecondary institutions and their service providers:

1. All Networks should be made “OPEN” to the exchange of electronic student records thus expanding the reach of institutions everywhere.
2. If there is to be a central “hub”, as previously served by the “Texas Server”, its governance and financial support should be provided by the operator of the hub, the AACRAO SPEEDE Committee and the leading eTranscript service companies.
3. The industry must fully support standard file formatting and exchange protocols as defined under the PESCS umbrella.
4. All networks and other participants in the exchange of electronic student records must subscribe to a common set of values and restrictions with respect to the security and use of the records being passed across networks. All networks should be open to industry oversight.

Credentials Solutions is fully prepared to share in the financial support of a national “hub” or any other shared resource developed in the future for the purpose of facilitating the exchange of student records. Further, we welcome the continuing development of standards for data exchange and commit to supporting all such protocols going forward including any industry oversight that may evolve.

Over the past 15 years, Credentials Solutions has become recognized as a valued member of the

community and the source of numerous innovations that are now counted amongst the industry's "best practices". Moreover, our contributions to the industry have been delivered at virtually no cost to any college or university. From this position, we strongly urge the AACRAO membership, PESAC, Clearinghouse, Parchment, Scrip-Safe and all other participants in the electronic exchange of student records to come down on the side of transparency in the form of open networks, open governance and open standards. This is the only path that will assure continued growth and innovation in the eTranscript industry.

About Credentials Solutions

With TranscriptsPlus® and RoboRegistrar®, Credentials Solutions supports major SIS platforms while providing online ordering, automated hold checking, integrated student communications with 12 hour/day customer service, electronic extraction and delivery, and print and mail.

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Press Release courtesy of Online PR Media: <http://bit.ly/11iAWnT>

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