The Identity Problem in Online Higher Education – HEA Direction

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Context

- Growth of distance education – same problems
- Technological innovation
- Special focus on identity for online students
- Best practical approach vs. best available technology
- Triangulation
Higher Education Act Reauthorization

- HR 4137 as amended and passed
  - Complex and modifies thousands of pages of law
- Legislative history – initial identify verification
- Part H: Program Integrity
  - Section 496 modifies 20 USC 1099b
Regional Accrediting bodies

- Must apply same evaluation standards to distance education
- Are not required to have separate standards for distance education
- Must create processes for assuring identity:

“(ii) the agency or association requires an institution that offers distance education or correspondence education to have processes through which the institution establishes that the student who registers in a distance education or correspondence education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the program and receives the academic credit;”
So what happens next?

- Regional accreditation agency policies and procedures
- Institutional documentation of processes that allow confidence in identity
- Identify new ways to assess and feasibility of technology or process improvements.