



# Microcredentialing and the 21st Century University

**Monique LaRocque, Ph.D.**

*Associate Provost, Division of Lifelong Learning*



# What UMaine is doing re: Microcredentialing



## Engaged Black Bear Initiative

UMaine Blue Sky Plan (2012-2017):

- “aspires to be the most distinctively student-centered and community-engaged of all the American Research Universities”
- Provost asked for creation of learning pathways, use a digital badging system
- Associate Dean for Community Engagement, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences



# Engaged Black Bear Initiative Features:

Learning Pathways engage students on 3 levels (from participant to leader):



**Level 1 Badge: Introduction to a topic/theme**



**Level 2 Badge: Training/Practice**



**Level 3 Badge: Application/Leadership**



**Meta-Badge : awarded to students completing badge pathway**



# Engaged Black Bear Initiative

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- Students who earn multiple badges are eligible for Provost's Engaged Black Bear Award
- Engaged Black Bear cord at graduation
- ~1000 badges awarded/700 students, mostly Level 1

[Engaged Black Bear Digital Badges](#)



# Micro-Credentialing Statewide Initiative

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- Maine has established statewide educational attainment goal: 60% of Maine adults to achieve a post-secondary degree or vocationally significant credential by 2025
- UMS Board of Trustees in their *Declaration of Strategic Priorities to Address Critical State Needs*, states:
  - “in collaboration with existing businesses, non-profits, and community partners, UMS will develop coordinated workforce microcredentials that are relevant in the workplace for economic development and expansion.”



# University of Maine System Framework



- Based on Engaged Black Bear Badging System
- Meta Badges will be recognized as “Credential of Value” in the State of Maine:
  - must meet workforce needs
  - must be validated by an employer
  - must lead to employment opportunities
- Assistant Vice Chancellor for Digital Badges and Microcredentials



# University of Maine System Framework

## Challenges:

- Multiple initiatives underway which require faculty buy-in and participation
- Lack of faculty and staff understanding of alternate approaches to curriculum development
- Fragmented UMS understanding of employer needs
- Fragmented employer understanding of MCs, and ability to articulate needs/skills for credentialing
- Need for quick turn around for evolving MCs
- Lack of funding to support learners pursuit of MCs

