

## Themes from Interviews with Certification Bodies

### Value in Partnerships

- Most certification bodies are not familiar with the process to develop curriculum at universities.
- Nevertheless, they recognize that the educational landscape is changing rapidly, and they see value in exploring opportunities and partnerships with universities. The need for integration and partnerships is likely to grow in importance in the future.
- Certification bodies see the integration of non-degree and degree credentials as an opportunity to give students a leg up, while creating a pipeline for young professionals into the field. The approach can help to grow interest in the profession and expose students to the field.
- Many certification bodies are interested in developing relationships with universities and exploring development of curricula for new and/or expanding occupations.
- Some certification bodies indicated that they do not know where to begin the conversation to explore a partnership. Even those that currently have no formal program integrating certifications into degrees value opportunities to connect, learn from, and partner with educators.
- There is also an interest in raising the visibility and value of specific professions and the certification.

### A Recognition that Resources and Further Discussions Are Needed

- Many certification bodies discussed the importance of being able to articulate the return on investment (ROI) associated with industry and university partnerships.
- To successfully embed a certification program into a degree program, both the certification body and university need to allocate resources and staff time to maintain the program and the partnership.
- There need to be more discussions among universities and certification bodies to understand the level of certifications and how those levels match up to a four-year undergraduate degree.

### Potential Challenges

- Some challenges to closer partnerships between certification bodies and universities include certification prerequisites for experience and getting adequate student buy-in.
  - For some certification programs, bachelor's degrees are prerequisites; others are moving toward making degrees prerequisites.
- Certification bodies want to gain a better understanding of potential issues and barriers as seen by colleges and universities.
- Some certification bodies are concerned that a potential partnership with a university would be viewed as being biased toward a specific university.
- Credentialing bodies are interpreting the ISO/IEC 17024:2012, *Conformity assessment -- General requirements for bodies operating certification of persons*, standard differently, which impacts how they approach potential partnerships.