Embedding Certifications into Degree Programs

Karen Elzey, Associate Executive Director
Isabel Cardenas-Navia, Ph.D., Senior Director of Research

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AGENDA:

• Introductions

• A Framework for Embedding Microcredentials

• Creating New Pathways at Community Colleges

• Improving the Effectiveness of Industry Certification + Certificate/Degree Pathways

• How can You Get Involved?

• Questions
A FRAMEWORK FOR EMBEDDING MICROCREDENTIALS
Value of Non-degree Credentials

• In comparison to people with only a college degree, those with college degrees and non-degree credentials reported stronger agreement that their combined education helped them achieve their goals, was worth the cost, and made them more attractive job candidates.

• Nearly half of working-age adults with a college degree have combined a non-degree credential with a bachelor’s (47%) or associate’s (51%) degree.

• Individuals who hold a certification and/or a license are more likely to be employed, earn more, and believe they have a good job or career compared with someone who does not—at every educational level.

Value of Non-degree Credentials Continued

• Short-term credentials had positive impacts on retention and degree completion. However, it also showed noticeable racial disparities in those impacts, likely due to some learners earning short-term credentials with low labor market value. The authors also acknowledged that the length of the study may have resulted in an underreporting of the impact of earning short-term credentials, as many students were still enrolled and seeking their degree when the study period ended.

• Adults in stacked credential pathways were ten times more likely to earn a first credential than those who were not, were more likely to earn more than one credential, and improved their likelihood of employment post-completion.

• A 2017 study among 149 U.S. colleges and four-year institutions by Lumina Foundation found that the most commonly cited benefit of certification + degree pathways (C+D pathways) was that it enabled students to earn valuable industry and academic credentials at the same time. This study also showed that C+D Pathways also helped colleges and universities align their curricula with prevailing industry standards.

Sources:


Elements of a Framework to Embed Certifications & Other Non-Degree Credentials/Microcredentials

### Needs Analysis
- Identify labor market demand
- Determine target market population
- Benchmark against existing programs

### Build the Team
- Select academic discipline
- Conduct high-level curriculum design
- Identify or develop an assessment

### Build the Microcredential
- Identify resources needed
- Align to external standards and resources
- Communicate and signal to stakeholders
- Identify opportunities to scale
- Assess and measure

### Deliver the Microcredential
- Offer the microcredential to students
- Communicate to external stakeholders
- Assess and evaluate Indicators of success
- Conduct continuous improvement
CREATING NEW PATHWAYS AT COMMUNITY COLLEGES
Creating New Pathways at Community Colleges

- Workcred has received a three-year grant from ECMC Foundation.
- The grant will support the development of certification-degree pathways (C+D Pathways) in IT and health science at four community colleges:
  - Community College of Aurora, Delta College, Kirkwood Community College, and Moraine Valley Community College
  - These pathways will support first-generation, low-income, and adult learners in earning these credentials and entering the workforce.

- Partners:
Project Goals

• To establish efficient and effective replication of scaling of certification and degree pathways at community colleges.

• To evaluate the impact of these pathways on learner education and workforce outcomes.
Five Metrics of Success

• Develop C+D Pathways, with two at each of the four community college partners
• Enroll 250 students in the new C+D Pathways across the four community colleges
• Develop playbooks for community colleges and certification bodies
• Develop and pilot a metrics framework for C+D pathways
• Increase in knowledge among faculty on all four campuses on the benefits of C+D Pathways
IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF INDUSTRY CERTIFICATION + CERTIFICATE/DEGREE PATHWAYS
Improving the Effectiveness of Pathways

• Funder: Greater Texas Foundation

• Partners and Pathways:
  - Houston Community College will focus on pathways in Business Technology; Heating, Air Conditioning & Refrigeration; Criminal Justice; Medical Laboratory Technician; and Licensed Vocational Nursing
  - Texas Southmost College will focus on pathways in Industrial Mechanics and Maintenance Technology; Computer-aided Drafting; Commercial and Residential Electrician; and Accounting Technology
Project Goal

• To examine and align education and workforce stakeholders’ processes and policies in order to better support low-income and first-generation learners to complete industry certification + certificate/degree (iC+C/D pathways), earn postsecondary credentials of value, and enter the workforce.

• Goals will be met by:
  ▪ Seeking to align existing credentials with regional workforce needs so individuals earn credentials of value when they enroll in credential pathways at HCC and TSC;
  ▪ Including employers as key stakeholders in order to ensure that the credential pathways are aligned with regional workforce demands and will result in better labor market outcomes for individuals; and
  ▪ Developing an innovate playbook to share the knowledge from this project with other colleges.
HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?
How Can You Get Involved?

• Make the job task analysis and test blueprint available in a machine readable format.
• Identify what academic disciplines your certification is aligned to.
• Identify if there are specific skills that could be extracted from your certification and bundled in a smaller credential (e.g., microcredential at a college or university) that could lead to a student pursuing a certification in the future.
• Determine tools that you have or could develop to help colleges and universities align their curriculum to certifications.