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Embedding Certifications into Degree Programs

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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

Source: *Examining the Value of Non-degree Credentials*, Strada, July 28, 2021, <https://cci.stradaeducation.org/pv-release-july-28-2021>.

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.

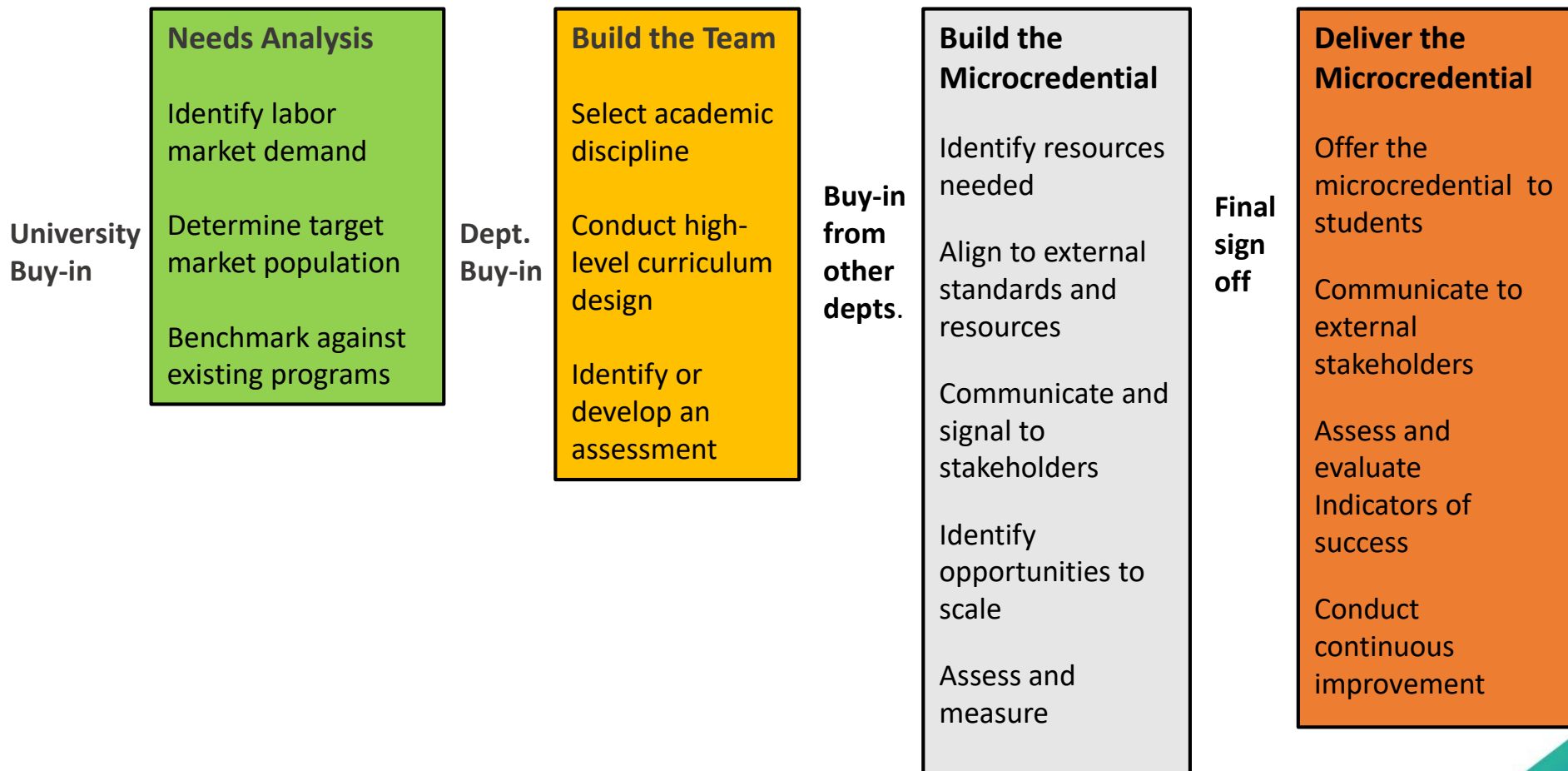
Sources:

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



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 blue print 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.

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