



Recognizing the Intersection of Learning, Career Development, and Gen Ed Reform Through Innovative Credentials

Ashley Finley, PhD

Vice President for Research & Senior Advisor to the
President
American Association of Colleges & Universities
(AAC&U)

Mike Simmons, PhD

Associate Executive Director, Business Development and
Strategic Partnerships
American Association of College Registrars and Admissions
Officers (AACRAO)

**Introductions in the Chat:
Who are you and why are
you here?**

AGENDA

- 1** Relevance
- 2** Transparency & Innovation
- 3** Collaboration



1

Relevance: Why is this important?

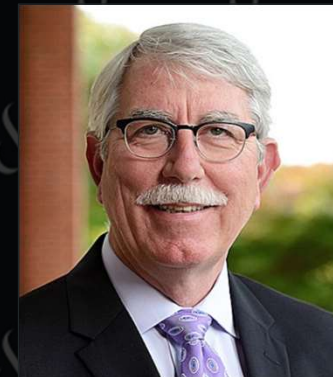
“I don’t know too many jobs that the job is being well-rounded. You know, it’s not like you’re going to go work at ‘Well-Rounded Inc’ or something.”

- Student, Wisconsin

"Outdated measures of quality, coupled with virtually zero transparency of value, have distorted the postsecondary education marketplace...With a fresh, innovative mindset and a willingness for accountability, we can ensure that students will receive a positive return on their college investment."

-Rep Burgess Owens (UT-04), Chairman of the House Education and Workforce Committee's Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Development

FALL 2011			ATT	ERN	GRD	QPT	GPA
AGR	100	INTRODUCTION TO AGRICULTURE	0.0	0.0	D	0.0	
		*REPEATED 1/15/2012					
CIS	101	PERSONAL COMPUTER APPLI	3.0	3.0	B	9.0	
COM	105	PUBLIC SPEAKING	3.0	3.0	C	6.0	
MTH	130	COLLEGE ALGEBRA	0.0	0.0	W	0.0	
SEMESTER TOTALS			9.0	9.0		15.0	1.670
CUMULATIVE TOTALS			6.0	6.0		15.0	2.500
SPRING 2012			ATT	ERN	GRD	QPT	GPA
AGR	100	INTRODUCTION TO AGRICULTURE	3.0	3.0	A	12.0	
BIO	100	LIFE SCIENCE	4.0	4.0	B	12.0	
PHL	105	INTRO TO ETHICS	3.0	3.0	B	9.0	
ENG	101	COMPOSITION I	3.0	3.0	A	12.0	
SEMESTER TOTALS			13.0	13.0		45.0	3.462
CUMULATIVE TOTALS			19.0	19.0		60	3.158



The transcript "is a record of everything the student has forgotten." Tom Black

Learner Focused - the Why

- Learner
- Institution
- Faculty
- Employers
- Other?

Skills? General Education?

Credentialing work in general education courses can successfully remove the historical tension between the concept of “skills” and the concept of “learning outcomes” by allowing a “both/and” approach to teaching, learning, and assessment.

Why can this make a difference?

General education courses as a 'measure' of IE - traditional approach

Connections: general education and marketable skills

Relevance: demonstrate where general education fits into the big picture (e.g. retention) Other?

AAC&U Essential Learning Outcomes

Goal: Knowledge Areas

- Disciplinary knowledge and ways of knowing

Goal: Intellectual & Practical Skills

- Critical & Creative Thinking
- Written & Oral Communication
- Quantitative Literacy
- Information Literacy
- Inquiry & Analysis
- Teamwork & Problem-solving
- Reading

Goal: Personal & Social Responsibility

- Ethical Reasoning
- Intercultural Knowledge & Competence
- Civic Engagement & Global Learning
- Lifelong Learning

Goal: Integrative & Applied Learning

- Connections across disciplines & experiences

Goal: Mindsets Aptitudes & Dispositions

- Self-confidence & Growth Mindset
- Motivation & Initiative
- Belonging



2

Transparency & Innovation: How do we make change real and authentic?

Recent findings...

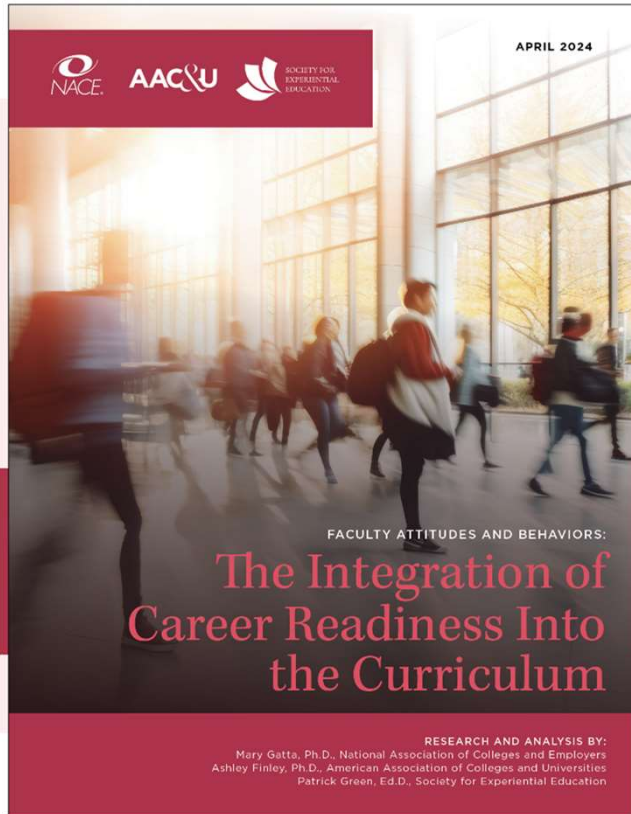


FIGURE 1: FACULTY AND CAREER ADVICE

More than nine out of 10 (92%) of faculty report that **students** in their disciplinary area asked them for career advice in the past year.



More than three out of five (63%) of faculty report that **alumni** from their institution reached out to them for career advice in the past year.



FIGURE 17: PERCENT OF FACULTY, BY DISCIPLINE, WHO REPORT INTEGRATING CAREER READINESS/CAREER INFORMATION INTO THEIR COURSES

All faculty



Business faculty



Professional Studies faculty



Social Science faculty



STEM faculty



Humanities faculty



The vast majority of faculty report they integrate career readiness and career information into their classes.



FIGURE 16: TOP WAYS FACULTY INTEGRATE CAREER READINESS/CAREER INFORMATION INTO THEIR COURSES



58%

Align course assignments with career readiness skills and competencies to help students identify/translate skills

55%

Align course outcomes with career readiness skills and competencies to help students identify/translate skills

52%

Bring in guest speakers from professional and career fields

39%

Have students complete a career-related project

38%

Career-related reflection to an assignment



Prevalence of Microcredentials

Employers who **CURRENTLY** offer
microcredentials

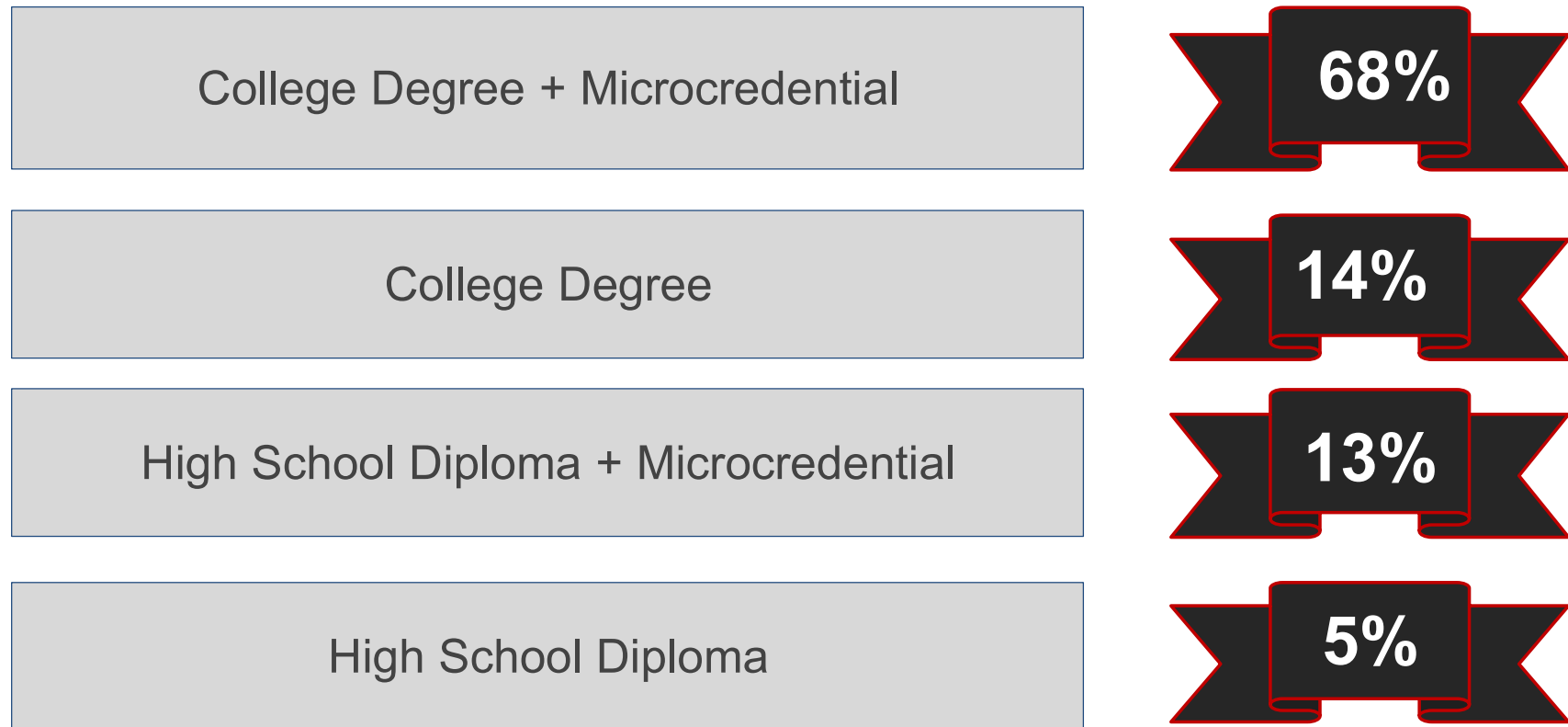
39%

Employers who **PLAN** to offer microcredentials in
the future

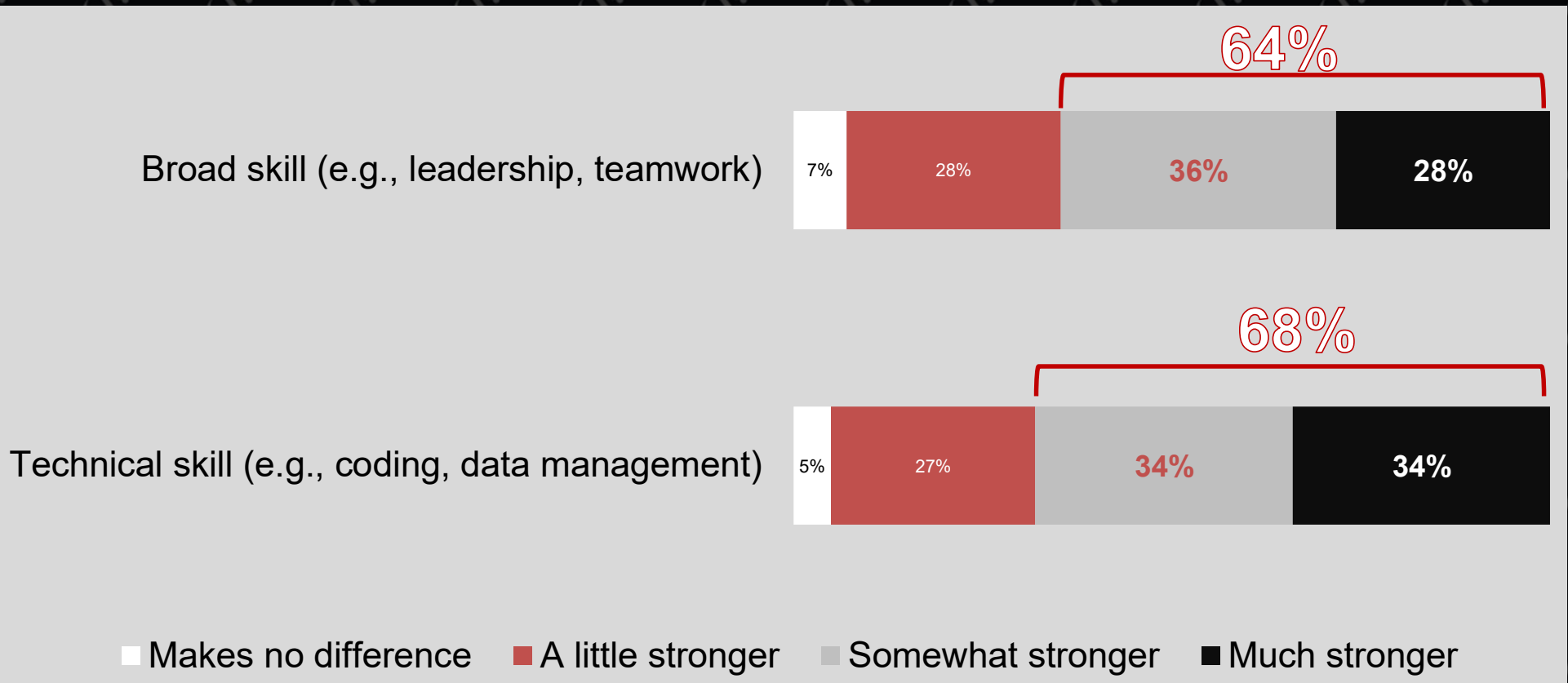
33%

Source: Finley, A., 2023, *The Career-Ready Graduate: What Employers Say About the Difference College Makes*, AAC&U

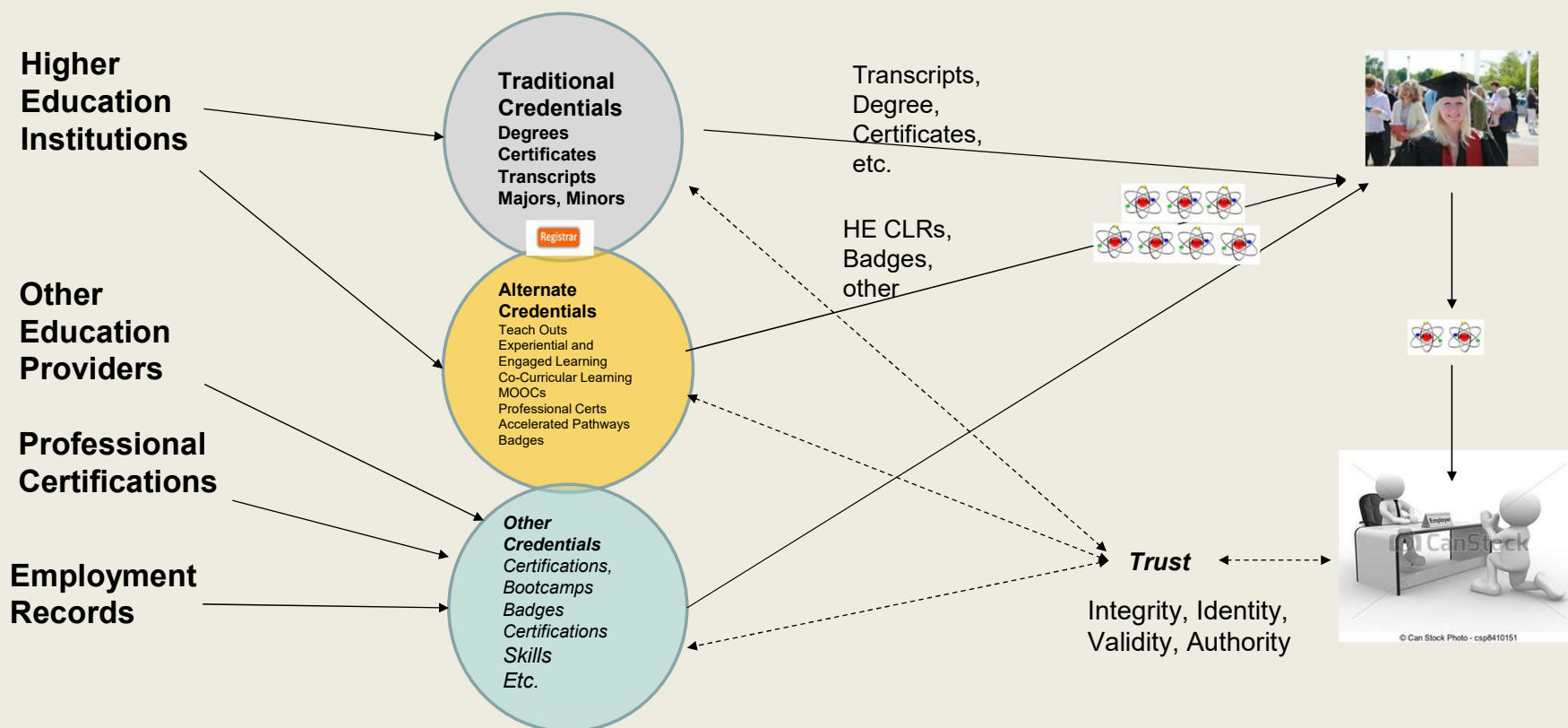
Preference for Microcredentials



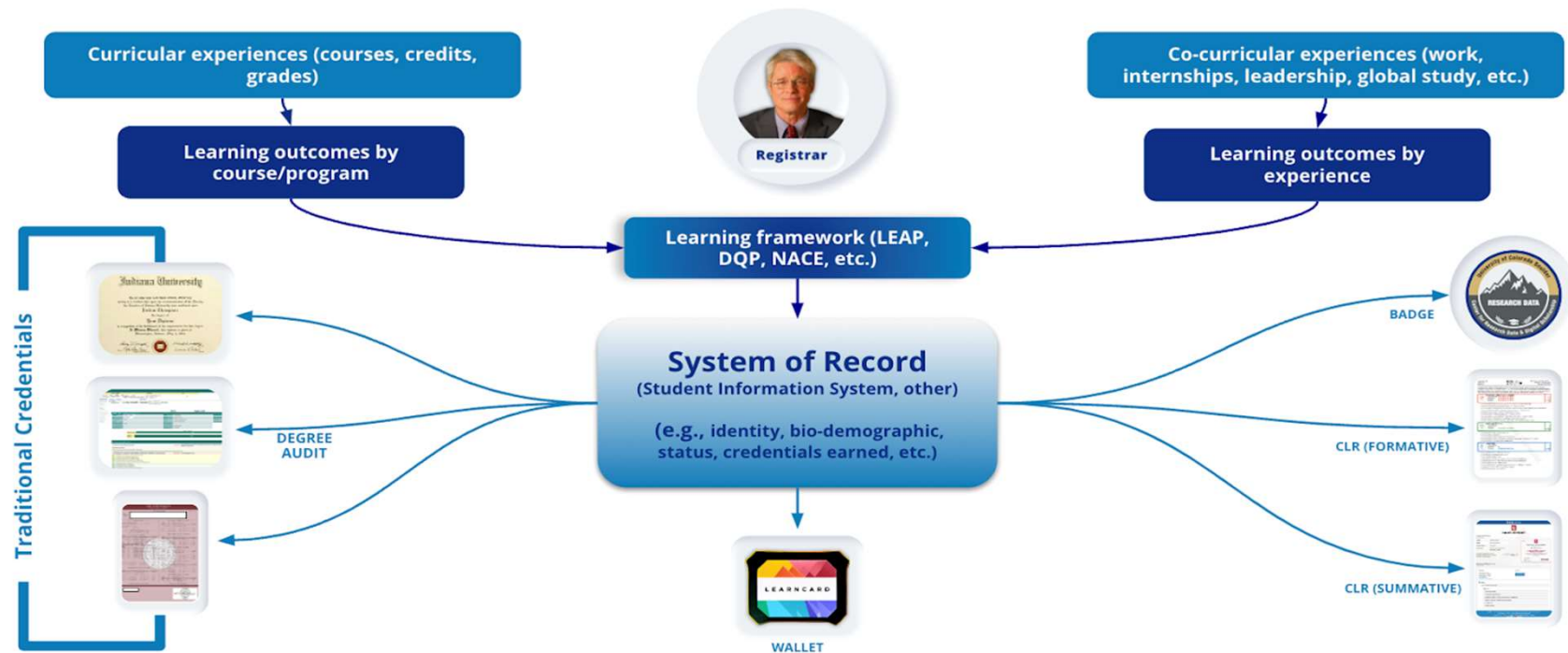
Strength of a job candidate with a microcredential in a...



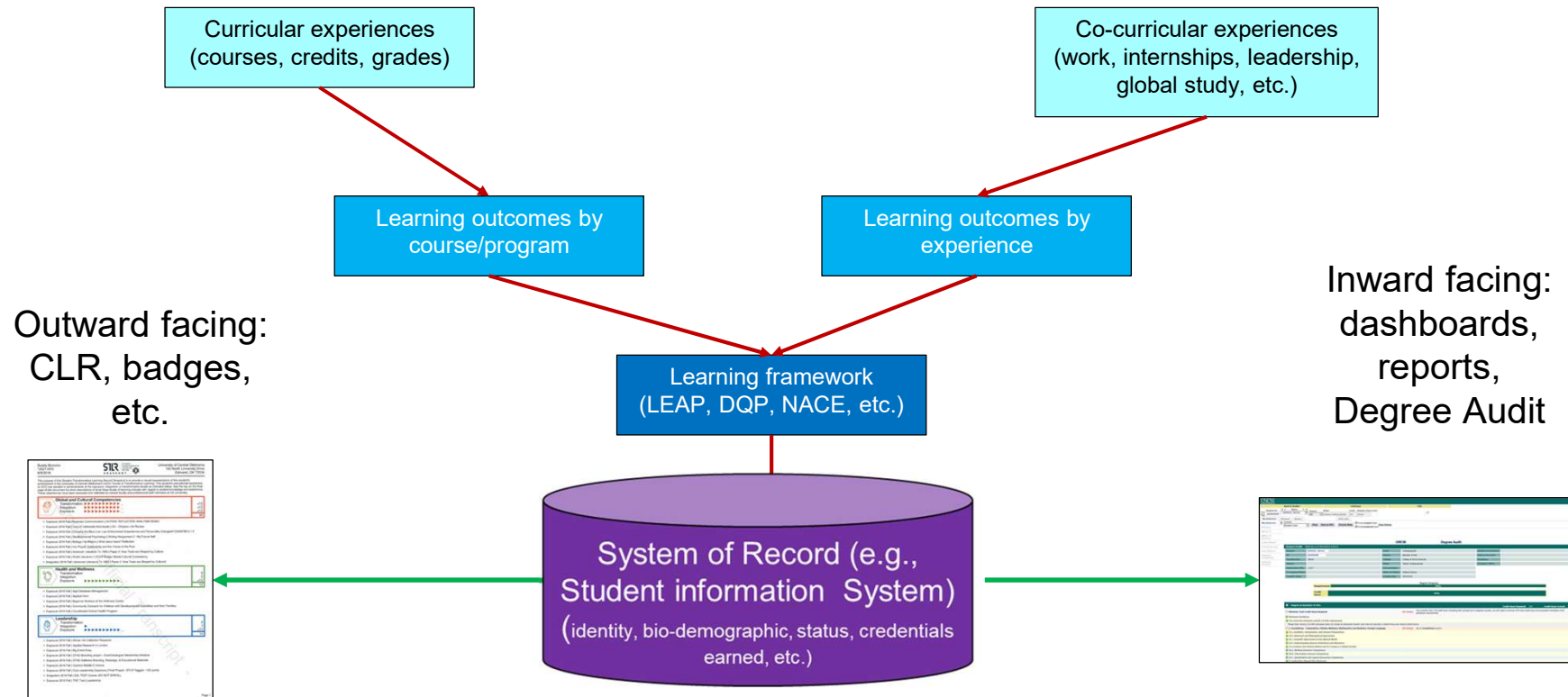
The CLR and LER



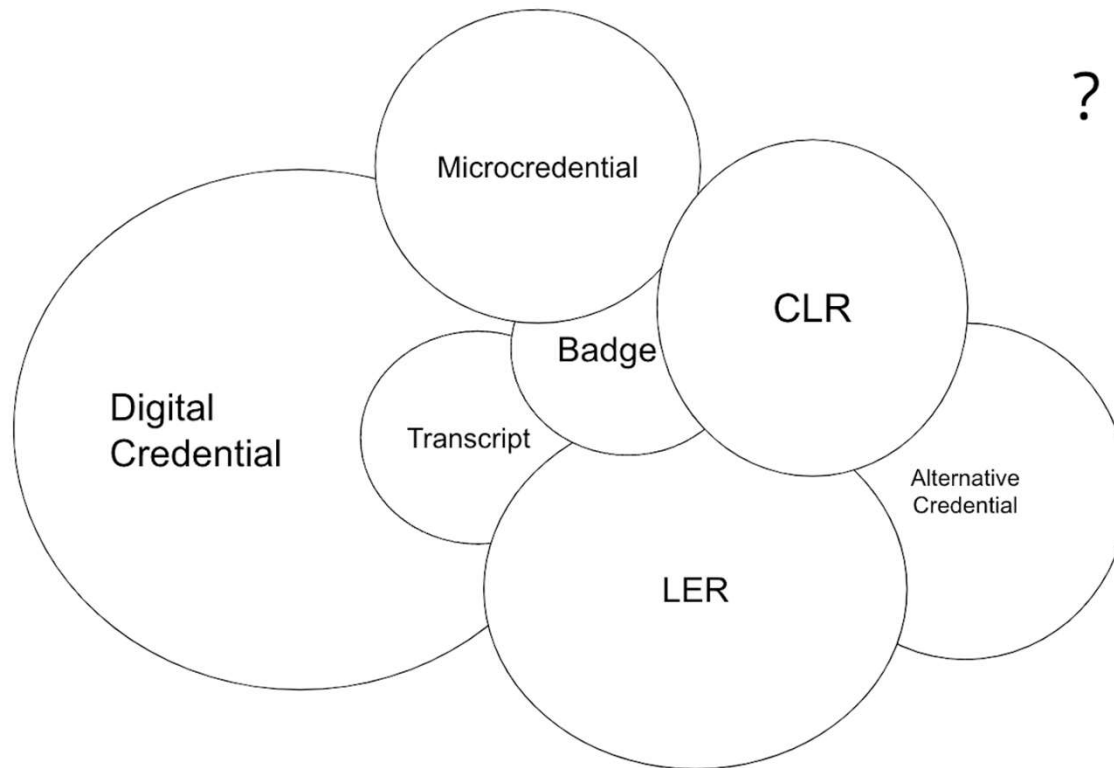
Higher Education Credentials



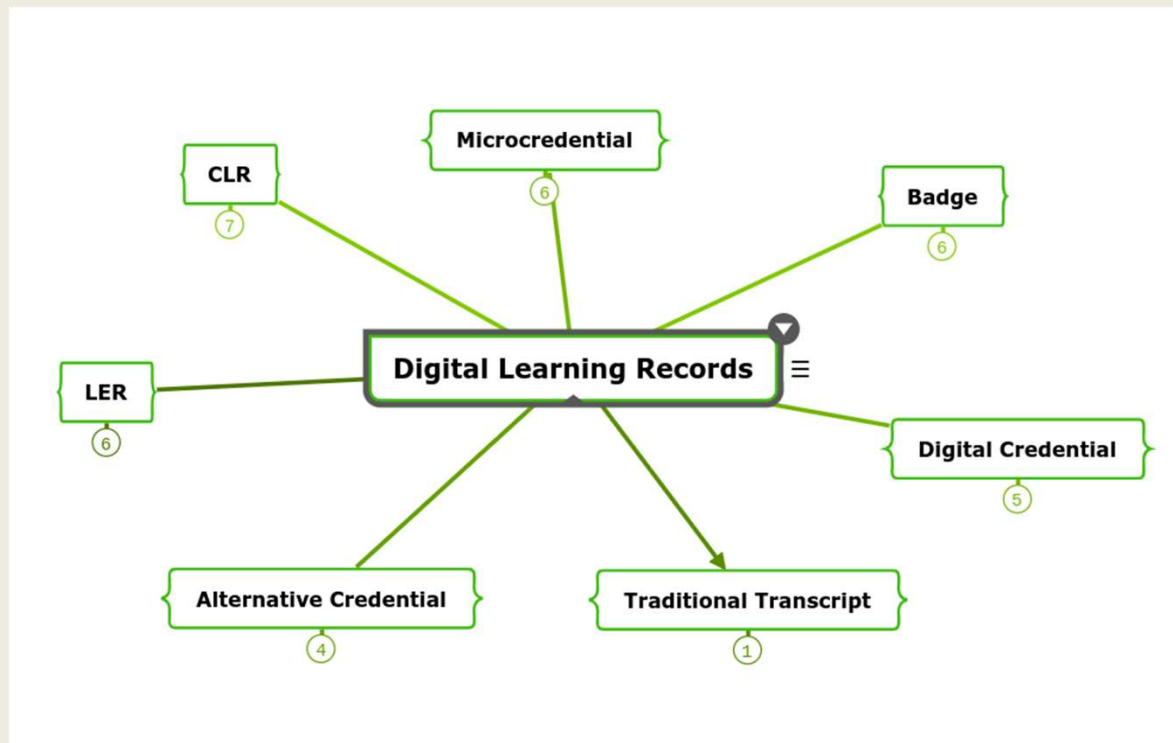
What are we trying to join together?



Are we saying the same thing?



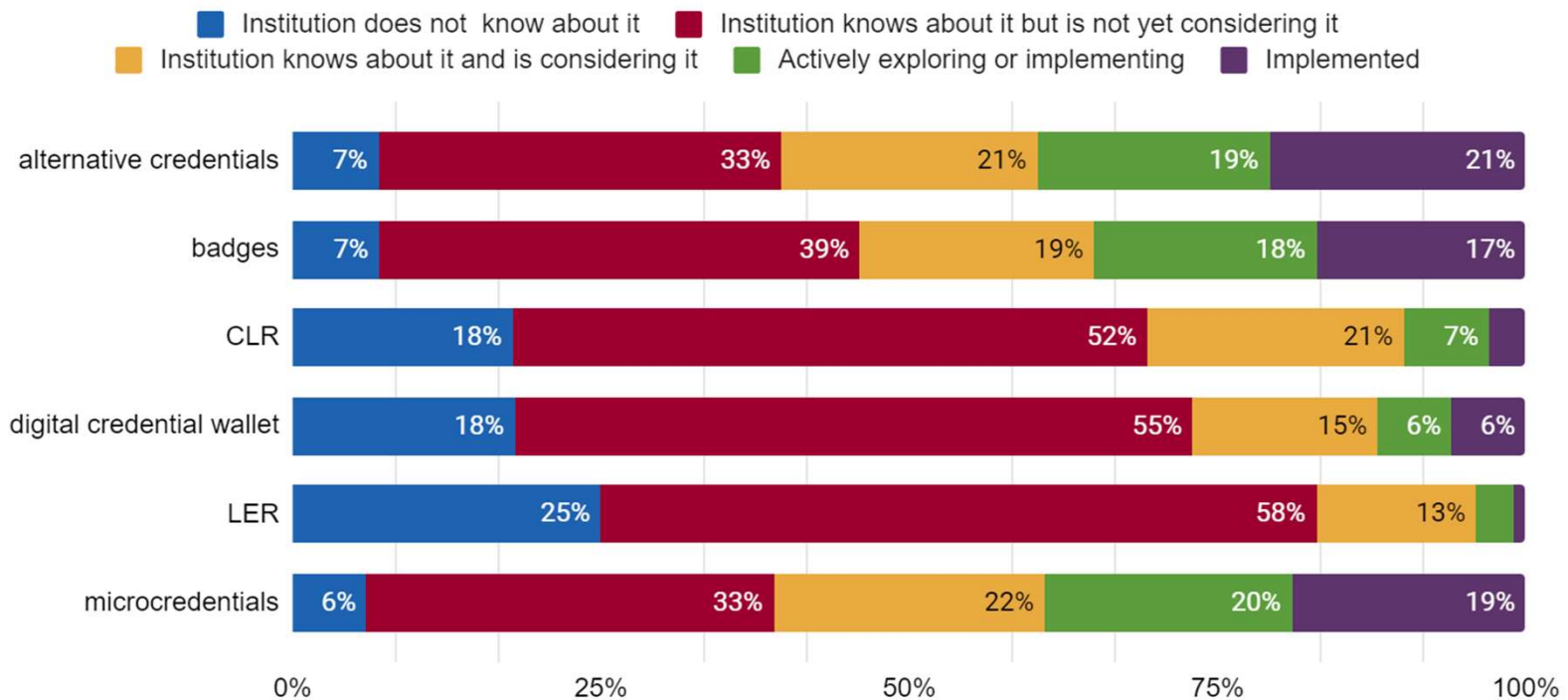
What's your word?



<https://www.mindomo.com/mindmap/digital-learning-records-b3eea7eed65647af80c326d60e8811c3>

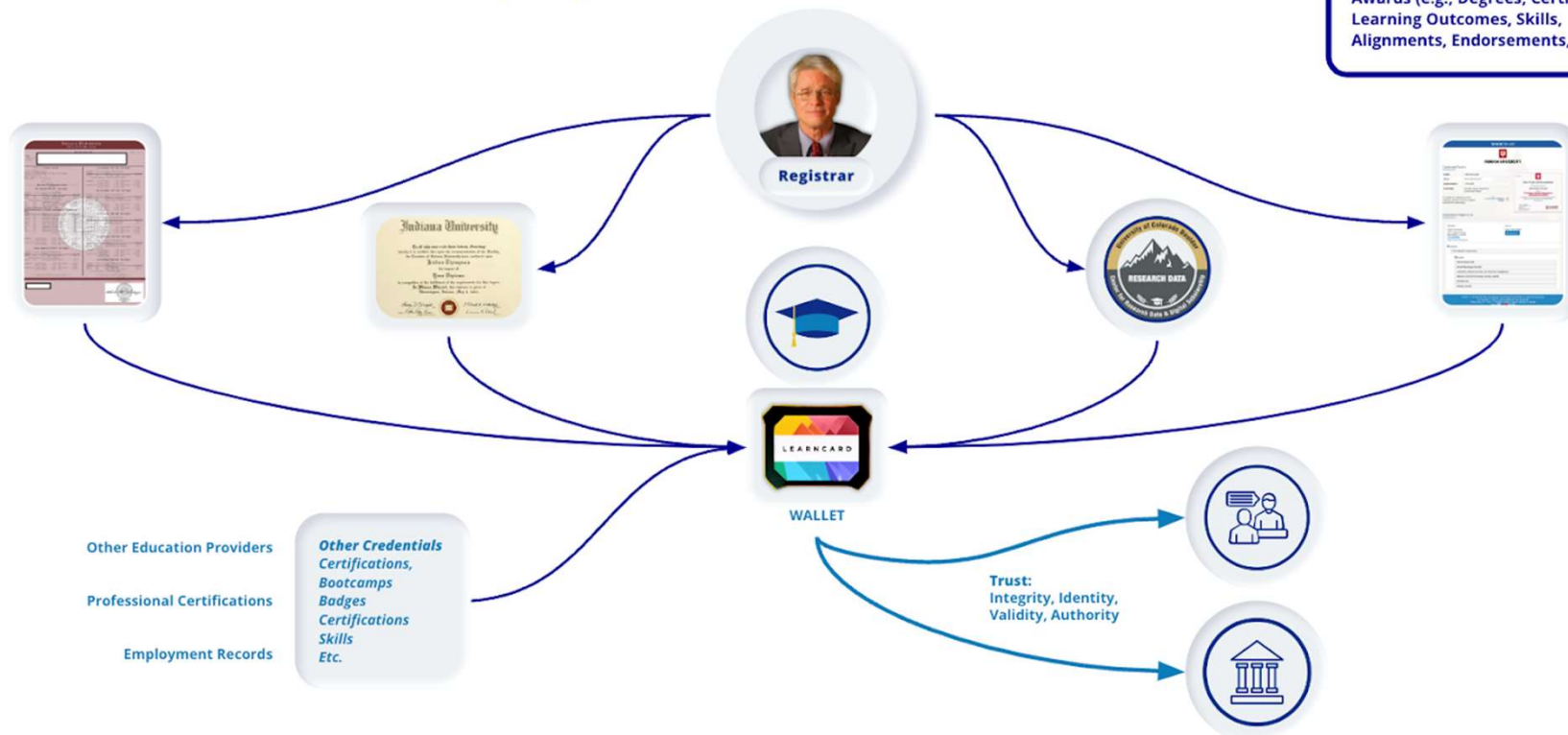
Data from the field:

Description of the current state of development of alternative credentials



Learner and Employment Records (LERs)

Awards (e.g., Degrees, Certificates, etc.)
Learning Outcomes, Skills, Competencies
Alignments, Endorsements, etc.



Campus Examples: University of North Texas

The screenshot shows the 'UNT Scrapy' learner record page. At the top, there's a green header with the UNT logo, 'Sign In', and 'Useful Links'. Below the header, the page title 'UNT Scrapy' is followed by the email 'untcareerconnect@unt.edu'. A note states: 'A learner record includes badges and pathways that have been completed or are in progress by this learner.' with a 'Learn More' link. On the left sidebar, there's a box for 'University of North Texas' and another for 'UNT Scrapy' with a list of credentials: 'Critical Thinking Skill Credential', 'French B.A. Marketable Skills', 'Written Communication Credential', 'Oral Communication Credential', and 'Teamwork Credential'. The main content area features the 'Critical Thinking Skill Credential' which is 'In Progress'. It includes a 'Verified' badge, a description of critical thinking, a '[more]' link, and a '1 Milestone' section with the 'Essential Knowledge in Critical Thinking Microcredential'. Below this, a '9 Prerequisites' section displays a grid of nine prerequisite badges: 'Design II ePortfolio Project', 'Critical Thinking in College Writing I', 'Critical Thinking in College Writing II', 'Critical Thinker in United States', 'Take Flight Job Shadowing', and 'Eaglethon Committee Member'.

UNT Scrapy - University of North Texas Badging

University of North Texas

In Progress



French B.A. Marketable Skills

Offered by: UNT College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences

Verified

Marketable skills for this degree include interpersonal, cognitive, and applied skill areas that... [\[more\]](#)

1 Milestone



[Collect and Analyze Data in French](#)

5 Prerequisites



[In Class Oral Presentation \(FREN 2050\)](#)



[In Class Oral Presentation \(FREN 3050\)](#)



[Reading Comprehension \(FREN 3055\)](#)



[Essay on French Movie \(FREN 3040\)](#)



[Group Oral Presentation \(FREN 3065\)](#)



Teamwork Credential

Offered by: University of North Texas

Verified

Teamwork is behaviors under the control of individual team members. This includes the effort they put into team tasks, their manner of interacting with others on team, and the quantity and quality of contributions they make to team discussions. [\[less\]](#)

4 Prerequisites



[First Flight](#)



[New Student Orientation](#)



[Eaglethon Committee Member](#)



[Alternative Service Break Participant](#)

Colorado Mountain College



[ESSENTIAL SKILLS CERTIFICATE CURRICULUM](#)

Through the essential skills certificate students acquire intellectual tools, knowledge, and creative capabilities necessary to study the world as it is, as it has been understood, and as it might become. The essential skills certificate achieved through general education courses prepares students for fulfilling lives as educated persons, and effective contributors to a democratic society.

Courses

Choose from any course listed as guaranteed to transfer (GT)

- One Written Communication course (3 credits)
- One Mathematics, 1 course (3-5 credits)
- One Arts & Humanities, or, History, or Social and Behavioral Science course (3-4 credits)
- Two courses of your choice from any course offering listed and guaranteed to transfer

Florida Gulf Coast

Transferable Skills Digital Badges



*No cost. No additional courses.
Available for active, currently
enrolled, undergraduate FGCU
Students.*

[LIST OF BADGES](#)

- Professionalism
- Career and Self-Development
- Leadership
- Teamwork
- Oral Communication
- Written Communication
- Critical Thinking
- Communication Technology
- Data Literacy
- Undergraduate Research Excellence

Univ. of Alabama-Birmingham

Blazer Core CURRICULUM



Blazer Core Curriculum

Blazer Core Curriculum is UAB's transformative new general education program, debuting in Fall of 2023. Drawing on a multi-year process of feedback and collaboration with faculty, students, administration, and community members, the new Blazer Core Curriculum has been designed to provide students with inspiring opportunities to understand and respond to the opportunities and challenges of today and the future.

Flags:

As students progress through Blazer Core, they will develop key skills and capabilities that sometimes are not reflected on their transcripts. Our innovative flagging program allows students to earn flags for course work and co-curricular activities that cultivate specific skills, perspectives, and habits of mind that reflect the goals of the core and ideals of UAB. Here are just a few of our important flags.

- Justice
- Wellness
- Sustainability
- Post-Freshman Writing
- Global/Multicultural Perspectives
- Civic Engagement
- High-Impact Practices

SUNY Geneseo (SUNY System)

Integrative Curricular Microcredentials

The following Integrative Curricular Microcredentials are available to matriculated and non-matriculated students in Bulletin Year 2022-2023.

Professional development microcredentials, that do not carry credit.



^ ICM in Performance as Social Change

Description:

Performance as Social Change is an academic credential for students interested in understanding the critical role arts-based performances play in facilitating and advancing social change through interdisciplinary coursework. The Microcredential includes the creation of a Capstone experimental performance. As part of this credential program, students will design their learning experiences around the concept of social change through performance. Throughout this program, underrepresented students of color and those that have unequal access and opportunity to performance-based knowledge, skills, and critical pedagogies will gain active mentorship by faculty of color and guest artists through curricular and co-curricular activities and self-reflection upon them. Students will exit the microcredential program with a broad array of skills and competencies related to social change, leadership, civic engagement, research, communication, and performance.



3

Collaboration: It's possible...and essential

Collaborators for Digital Learning

Registrar

- Tagging experiences
- Oversight of transcript/student records
- Accountability

Advisors

- Communication
- Advocacy
- Sense-making

Instructional Designers

- Application to courses
- Assignment design
- Interdisciplinary design and idea generation

Institutional Research

- Equity metrics
- Post-graduation metrics
- Connecting data across divisions
- Data architecture

LER Accelerator

Boost/accelerate the adoption of LERs in postsecondary education by focusing on

1. overcoming implementation delays
 2. raising awareness
 3. fostering collaboration among educational associations who represent the important campus stakeholders responsible for this work. (AAC&U, AACRAO, ACE, AIR, AACC, C-BEN, 1EdTech, Digital Credentials Consortium, Educause, NACE, NACADA, UPCEA)
- <https://learnworkecosystemlibrary.com/initiatives/accelerator-initiative-le>

Resources: AACRAO & AAC&U

- ([Digital Credentials - American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers \(aacrao.org\)](#))
- [Digital Credentials \(aacrao.org\)](#)
- [Understanding the Future of Credentials - Credential Chats \(aacrao.org\)](#)
- [Interest in Skill-Based Learning Not Keeping Up With Demand](#), January 19, 2024
- [Year 3 of 'Beyond Transfer'](#), January 18, 2024
- [Credential Confusion](#), December 14, 2023
- [An Ecosystem of Trust](#), December 7, 2023
- [Evolving the Learning and Employment Ecosystem](#), November 27, 2023
- [Well Assessed and Well Expressed](#), September 28, 2023
- [Evolving the Learning and Employment Ecosystem in Higher Education \(aacrao.org\)](#)
- <https://www.aacrao.org/signature-initiatives/learning-mobility>

- [The Career-Ready Graduate](#) (employer study)
- [Faculty Attitudes & Behaviors: The Integration of Career Readiness Into the Curriculum](#) (AAC&U, NACE, SEE)
- [Curriculum to Career Innovations Institute](#)
- [Essential Learning Outcomes](#)
- [VALUE Rubrics](#)
- [Value Scoring Collaborative](#)

Q&A



finley@aacu.org
simmonsm@aacrao.org
