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# At the Intersection of Learning, Employment, and Innovative Credentials: The Potential Roles of IR/IE

# Part 2

# Housekeeping

- Your microphone will stay muted through the webinar.

- We welcome your questions and comments! Please use the Q/A section.

- Presentation slides will be shared via email following the presentation.

- Webinar is being recorded and you will be notified how to access the recording.

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# Darlena Jones, Ph.D. (Moderator)

- Senior Director of Analytics, Research, & Education for AIR

- Direct assessment and research initiatives; develop educational opportunities.

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# Part 1: Innovative Credentials and the Accelerator Initiative

*Ashley Finley, Ph.D.*

Vice President of Research and Senior Advisor to the President, AAC&U

*Mike Simmons, Ph.D.*

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

# Part 2: Focused Conversation on IR/IE Roles

## Kristin Moser, Ph.D.

Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning and Assistant to the President, University of Northern Iowa

## Mike Simmons, Ph.D.

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

# AIR Survey: IR/IE and Institutional Micro-Credentials

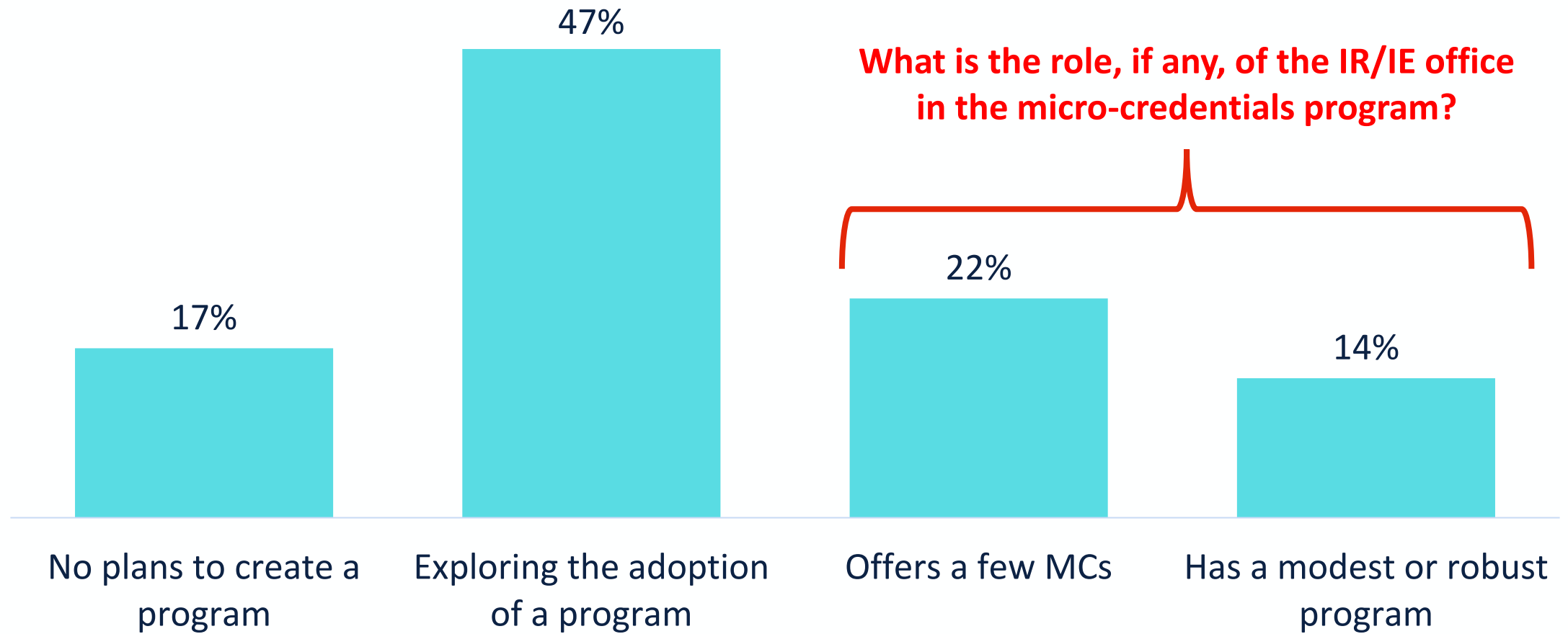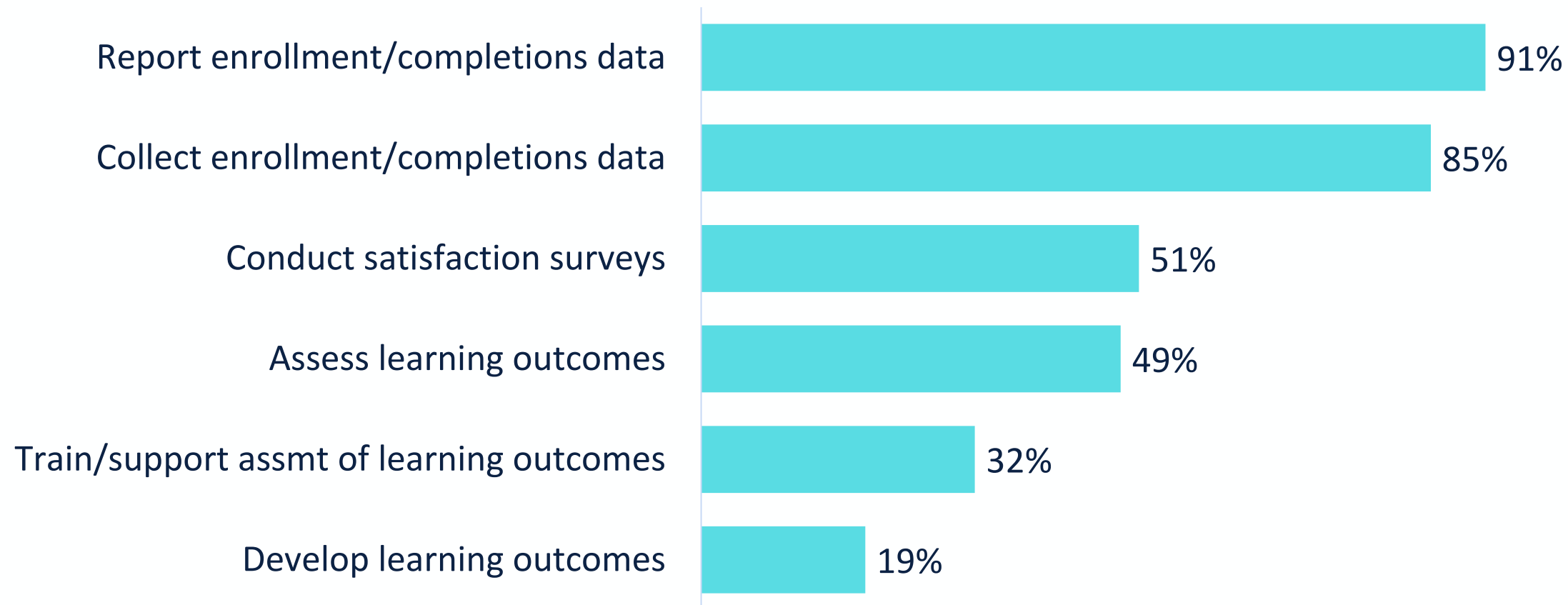| Data collection | Reporting |
|---|---|
| • Survey launched March 27, 2024 – 500 participants <br> • Relaunched April 9, 2024 – Another 500 participants <br> • Collected 122 responses for a 12% response rate; worst response rate in our history | • Didn't report results due to poor response rate <br> • Sharing limited results here <br> • *Take with a grain of salt!* |

*Are Micro-Credentials not on the IR/IE radar?*

# Level of Institutional Engagement with Micro-Credentials (MCs)

# Role of IR/IE office in Micro-Credential Program



| | |
|---|---|
| Report enrollment/completions data | 91% |
| Collect enrollment/completions data | 85% |
| Conduct satisfaction surveys | 51% |
| Assess learning outcomes | 49% |
| Train/support assmt of learning outcomes | 32% |
| Develop learning outcomes | 19% |

*NOTE: 97% of IR/IE offices whose institutions have MC programs play some role in those programs.*

**Kristin Moser, Ph.D.**

*Assistant to the President and Director of Institutional Effectiveness & Planning, University of Northern Iowa*

# Why Now?  or The Time is Now

- Enrollment challenges
  - Great opportunity for adult learners and returners
- External accountability
  - Accreditation
  - Public perception
  - Value of higher education

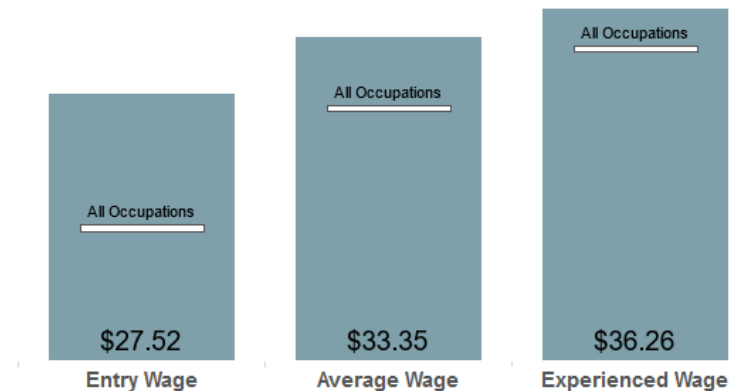- Skilled worker/labor shortages

- Service for students

# Real World Applications to IR/IE

- Institutional research ⟶ Institutional effectiveness

- Building trust in institutional data

- Economic impact and workforce development
  - Occupational projections ⟶ In-demand degrees and credentials

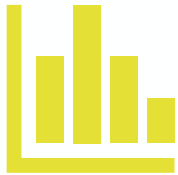- General education curriculum and academic assessment

BCS Programs serve **all 99 counties** in Iowa

**2,816 students** were reached through BCS programs

## Hourly Wages

All Occupations
$27.52
**Entry Wage**

All Occupations
$33.35
**Average Wage**

All Occupations
$36.26
**Experienced Wage**

Wage Data Source: 2023 Iowa Wage Report

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# Challenges and Opportunities

## Measurement

Data access

Tagging credentials

Tracking and reporting

## Leverage Opportunity

Campus silos

Build collaborative teams

## Storytelling

Build momentum internally

External accountability

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# Cross-functional Collaboration

- Build confidence / data integrity

- Showcase IR/IE skills

- Budget implications/resource allocation

- Senior leadership

# Mike Simmons, Ph.D.

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

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*"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

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# What's your word?
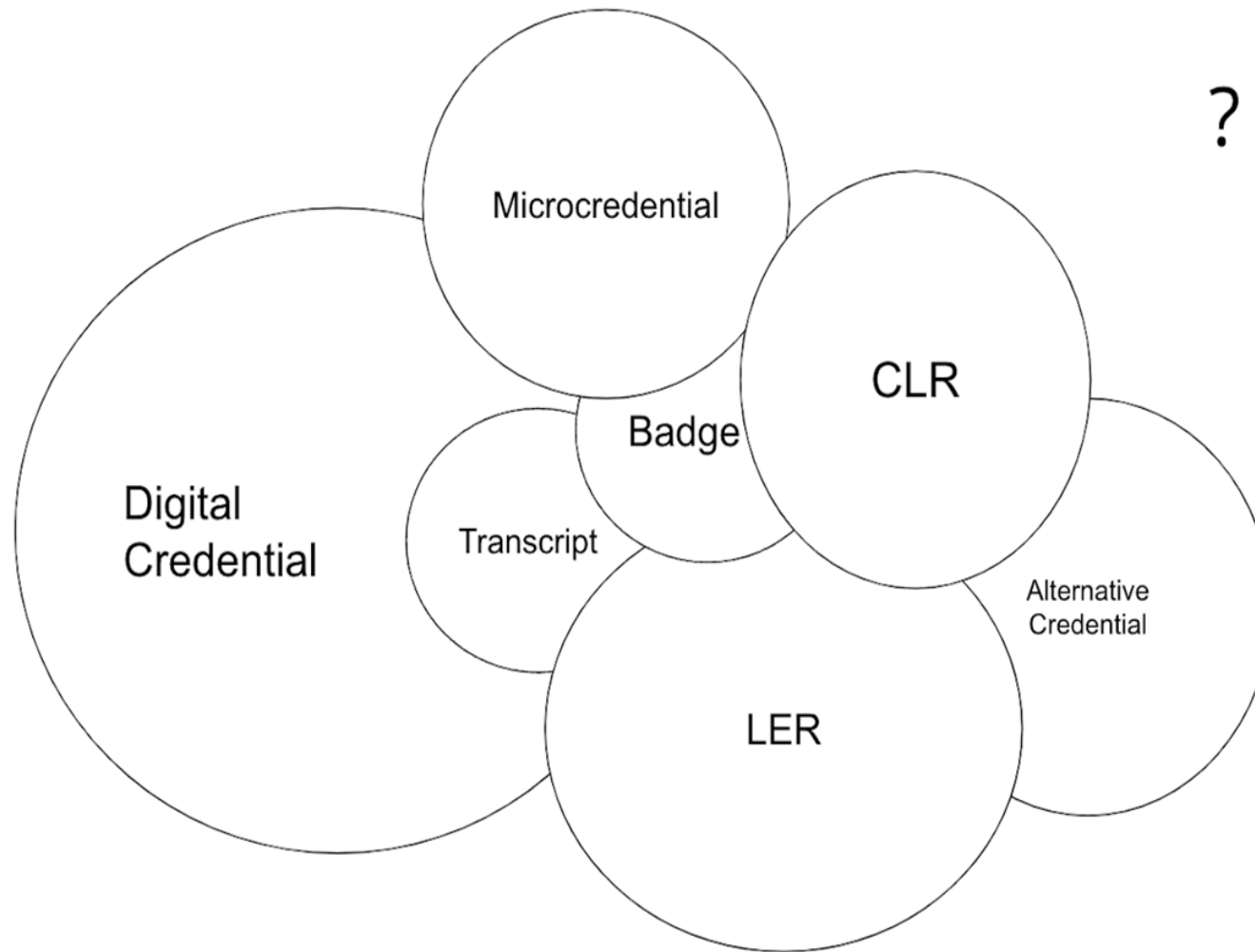


Can we agree: Innovative Credentials?

Innovative Credentials = Microcredentials, Digital Badges, Learning and Employment Records (LERs), Comprehensive Learner Records (CLRs), etc.
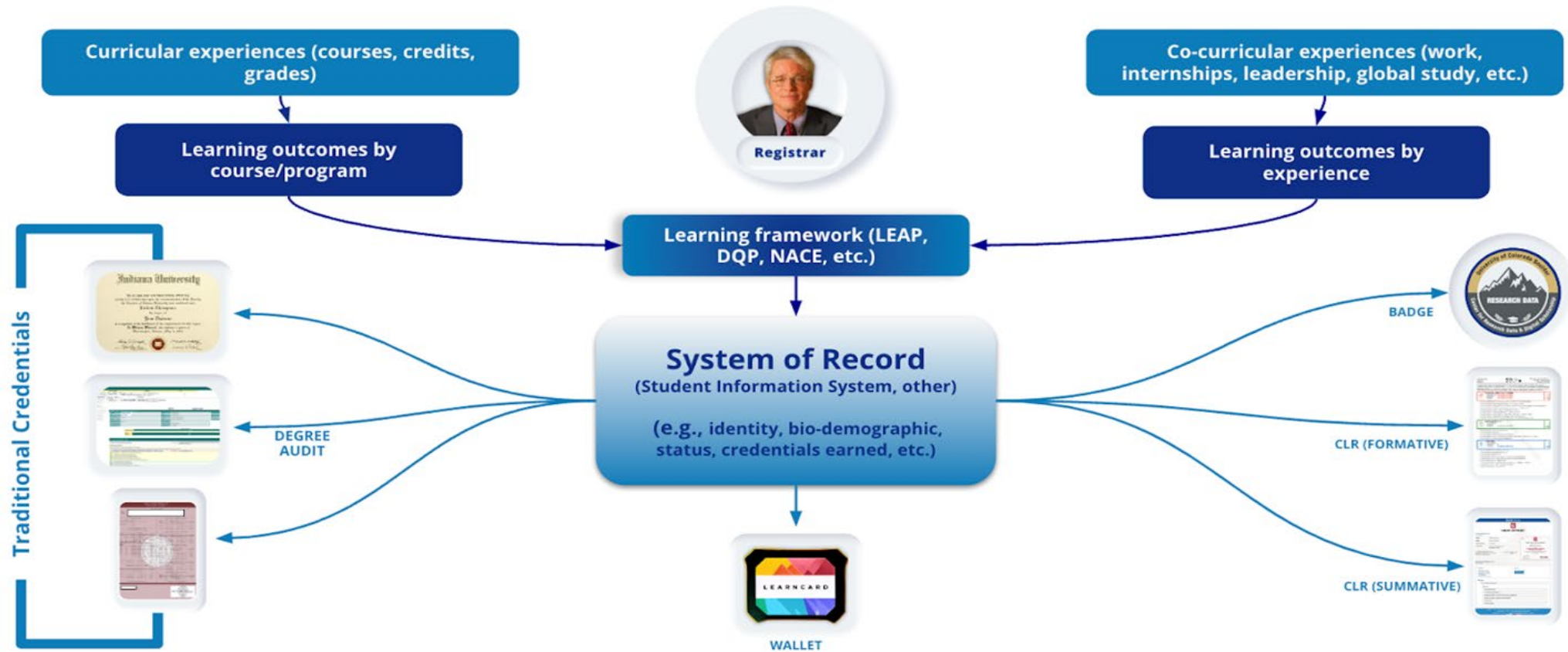
Importance of these innovative credentials in modern higher education
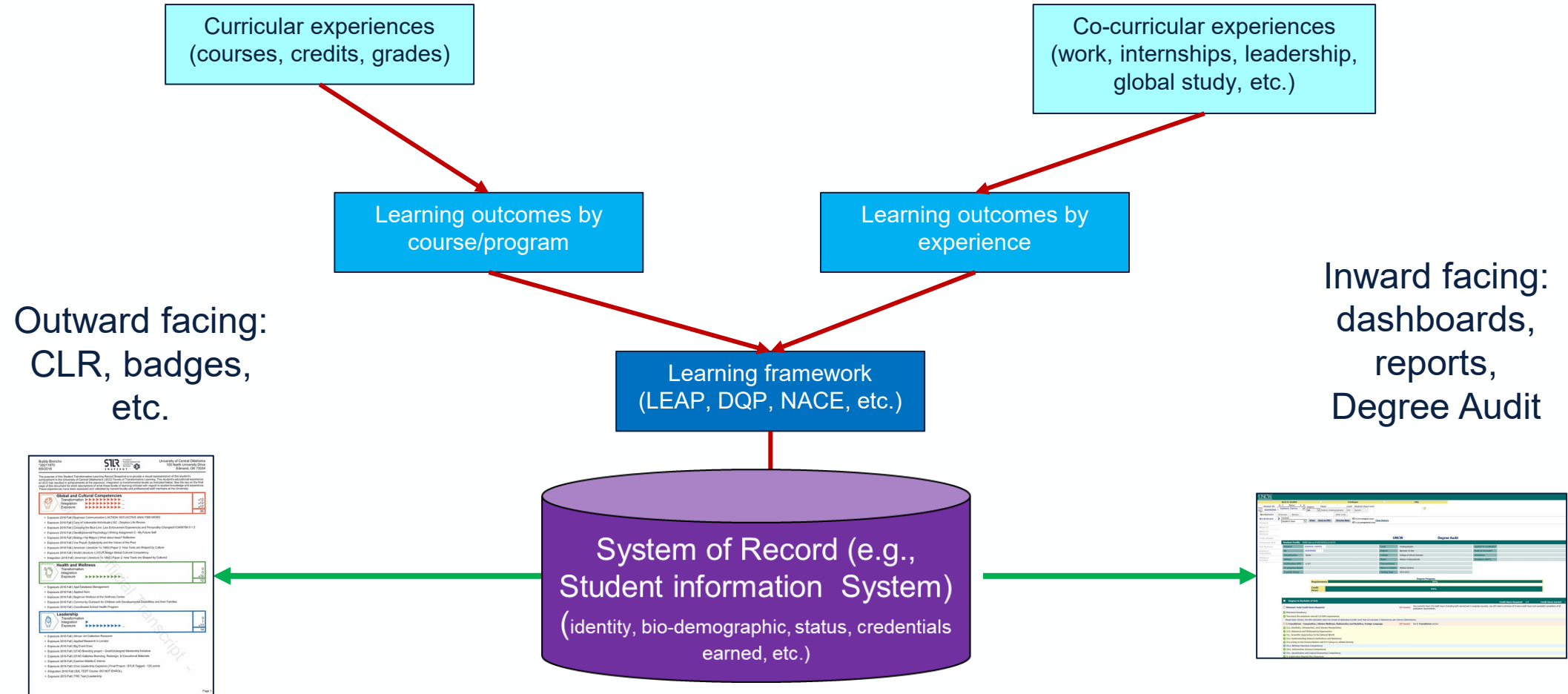
Benefits of Innovative Credentials:
  Flexibility in learning and skill recognition
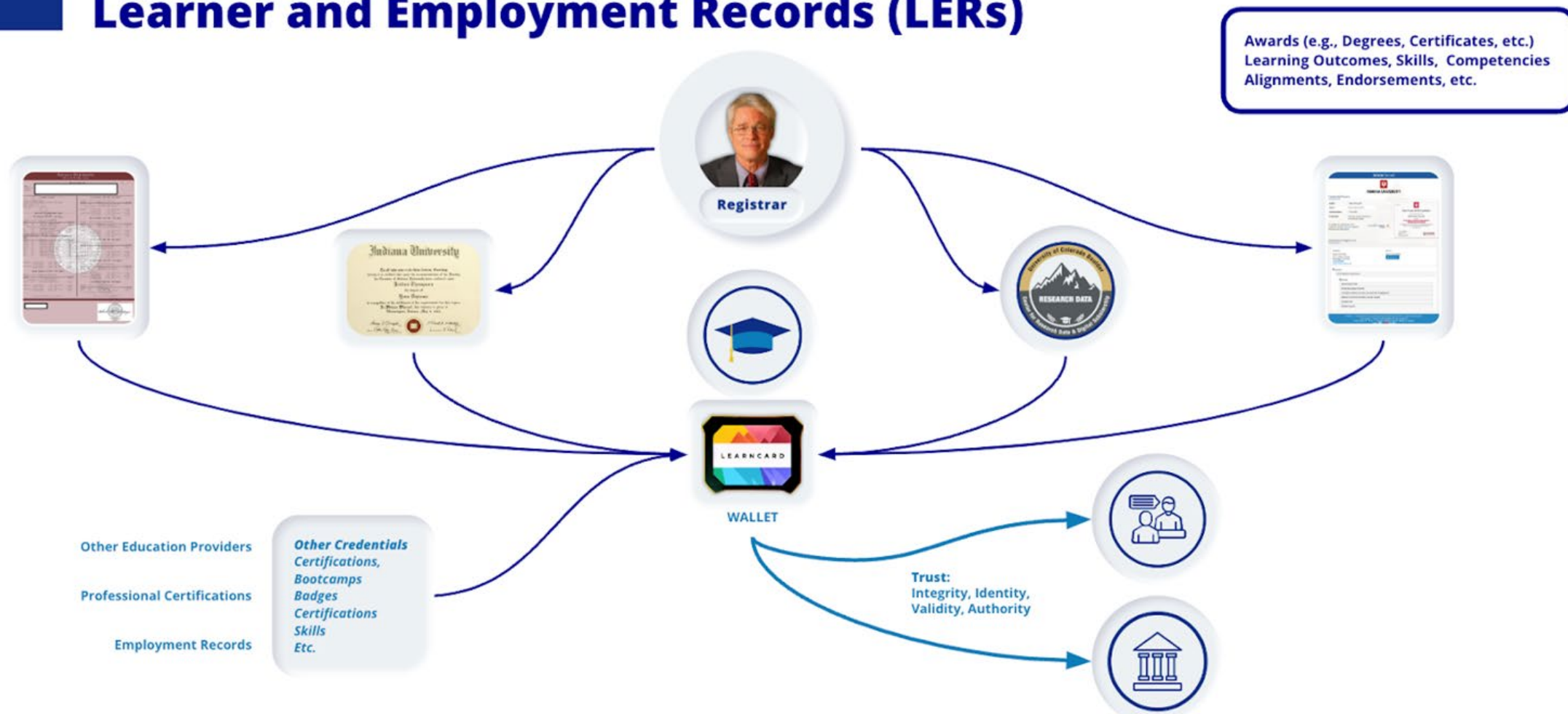  Enhanced employability and workforce readiness.

# Higher Education Credentials

Curricular experiences (courses, credits, grades)

Co-curricular experiences (work, internships, leadership, global study, etc.)

Registrar

Learning outcomes by course/program

Learning outcomes by experience

Learning framework (LEAP, DQP, NACE, etc.)

**System of Record**
(Student Information System, other)

(e.g., identity, bio-demographic, status, credentials earned, etc.)

Traditional Credentials

DEGREE AUDIT

BADGE

CLR (FORMATIVE)

CLR (SUMMATIVE)

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# What are we trying to join together?

# Learner and Employment Records (LERs)

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

Registrar

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Other Education Providers

Professional Certifications

Employment Records

**Other Credentials**
Certifications,
Bootcamps
Badges
Certifications
Skills
Etc.

**Trust:**
Integrity, Identity,
Validity, Authority

# Credentials 101

- Learner: a more inclusive term than "student", which connotes a more traditional person or environment for learning

- Learning activity: any course, co-curricular event that results in demonstrated learning

- Credential: an earned award that carries with it validation of learning, knowledge, skills; this may be a degree or a certificate and is typically asserted by a recognized authority.

- Micro-credential: an award that is a subset of learning achievements/outcomes less than a full degree; It may or may not be asserted by a recognized authority.

- Authority: the governance structure that stands behind a credential; these include state education agencies, accreditors (institution and program-level), and within an institution, a specific college or department

- Trust: The recipient's belief that the credentials received have value (governance), are validated (true), are associated with the learner (identity) and are unchanged (immutable).

- Assessment: A process that ensures appropriate rigor and expertise to evaluate a learning activity to determine to what extent learning may have occurred

- Validation: A process that ensures that the results of an assessment are legitimate and conform to expected standards specific to that activity

- Immutable: a record may not be altered without evidence of tampering

- Self-sovereignty: the ability of a learner to control the sharing of her credentials without a required intermediary (i.e., registrar's office) without violating trust.

# Statement of Aspirational Practice for Institutional Research

https://www.airweb.org/ir-data-professional-overview/a-statement-of-aspirational-practice-for-institutional-research

**Expanded Definition of Decision Makers**: Transition from traditional hierarchical models, Emphasis on diverse and inclusive decision-making roles.

**A Student-Focused Paradigm**: Transparent data and analytics focused on improving the student experience, Providing students with access to high-quality, usable information.

**Students and Faculty as Decision Makers**: Empowering students with information for educational pathways, Supporting faculty with data for policy and structure decisions.

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"Colleges and universities have responsibilities for assisting students in decisions about their educational pathways. These decisions include student choice to comply with institutional requirements and to select non-required pathway options. Students deserve access to usable information that is focused on their decisions, is of high quality, and is not so highly aggregated or obfuscated by higher education jargon to fail to be useful."

Students as Decision Makers

"

Faculty and faculty committees have access to data and information to support decisions about policies and structures for which they have oversight. Individual faculty members have access to data and information to support them in designing their work, with special emphasis on student learning outcomes

"

Faculty as Decision Makers

Innovative credentials support the new IR paradigm by:
1. Providing granular data on learning outcomes
2. Empowering student decision-making
3. Enhancing program effectiveness
4. Improving workforce alignment
5. Supporting accreditation processes

# Granular Data

- Enhanced Data Collection: Innovative credentials and related systems like LMS can provide a structured and standardized way to collect data on student achievements, skills, and competencies.
  - These credentials can capture granular information about specific learning outcomes, allowing IR professionals to gain deeper insights into student learning patterns.
  - Innovative credentials can be linked to evidence of learning, such as portfolios or assessments, providing a more comprehensive view of student achievements.
- Improved Data Analysis: Innovative credentials offer opportunities for more sophisticated data analysis in IR.
  - By leveraging digital platforms and tools, IR professionals can analyze large datasets associated with innovative credentials to identify trends, patterns, and correlations.
  - Advanced analytics techniques, such as machine learning and data mining, can be applied to credential data to uncover valuable insights about student performance and program effectiveness.

**Granular Data**

- Enhanced Decision-Making: Digital credentials provide IR professionals with actionable data to inform decision-making processes.
  - The data captured through digital credentials can be used to identify areas for improvement in curriculum, teaching methods, and student support services.
  - IR professionals can use digital credential data to assess the effectiveness of interventions and initiatives aimed at improving student success and program outcomes.
- Streamlined Accreditation Processes: Digital credentials can facilitate the accreditation process for institutions and programs.
  - Accrediting bodies often require evidence of student learning outcomes and program effectiveness. Digital credentials can serve as a reliable and verifiable

# Student Decision Making

Credentials, Dashboards, Pathways = tools which:

- Highlight learning patterns for student, instructor, institution
- Digital capture and display of granular learning data
- Provide detailed insight into skill / SLO acquisition
- Visualize and personalize learning pathways
- Early intervention or change opportunities

# Program Effectiveness

Gain insights into student learning patterns and program effectiveness that can be used to:

- Identify areas for improvement

- Make data-driven decisions enhance program quality.

Innovative credentials measure specific learning outcomes:
- Real-time feedback on curriculum relevance
- Empower faculty with data for curriculum design and assessment

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# Workforce Alignment

- Map credentials to industry-demanded skills
- Collaborate with employers on credential design
- Use LERs to track post-graduation employment outcomes

-Analyzing employer recognition of innovative credentials
- Tracking post-graduation employment rates for credential holders
- Identifying skills gaps through credential demand

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"Microcredentials offer a new lens through which to view and validate learning, potentially reshaping accreditation processes." - WCET Frontiers

# Accreditation

- Reliable and verifiable source of evidence for accreditation purposes
- Streamline the collection and submission of accreditation-related data, making the process more efficient and less burdensome
- Providing a standardized and efficient way to document and verify student achievement
- Reduces the administrative burden on institutions and accrediting bodies

# Concept: Stackable Credentials

Stackable Innovative Credentials
- Assignment-Level Learning Outcomes Data.
- How stackable digital microcredentials provide detailed insights.
- Tracking specific skills and knowledge at the assignment level.
- Example of using stackable credentials to monitor student progress and achievements.

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# UNT Scrappy - University of North Texas Badging

Digital credentials support the new IR paradigm by:
  1. Empowering student decision-making
  2. Providing granular data on learning outcomes
  3. Enhancing program effectiveness
  4. Improving workforce alignment
  5. Supporting accreditation processes

- [Learning Mobility](#)
- [Innovative Credentials](#)
- [Understanding the Future of Credentials - Credential Chats (aacrao.org)](#)
- [Interest in Skill-Based Learning Not Keeping Up With Demand](#), [Year 3 of 'Beyond Transfer'](#)
- [Credential Confusion](#)
- [An Ecosystem of Trust](#)
- [Evolving the Learning and Employment Ecosystem](#)
- [Well Assessed and Well Expressed](#)
- [Evolving the Learning and Employment Ecosystem in Higher Education (aacrao.org)](#)

1. AIR's Professional Development and Training: https://www.airweb.org/collaborate-learn/professional-development-training

2. EDUCAUSE's "7 Things You Should Know About Microcredentials": https://library.educause.edu/resources/2019/5/7-things-you-should-know-about-microcredentials

3. IMS Global Learning Consortium's Digital Credentials resources: https://www.imsglobal.org/activity/digital-credentials

4. The American Council on Education's "Evaluating Digital Credentials: A Guide for HR and Talent Management Professionals": https://www.acenet.edu/Documents/Evaluating-Digital-Credentials-Guide-for-HR-Talent-Management-Professionals.pdf

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# Questions or Discussion