Policy Framework for Innovation and Credential Transitions

WCET Annual Summit
21st Century Credentials
June 8 & 9, 2016
Salt Lake City, UT
Why do we mean by credential?

• “A documented award by a responsible and authorized body that has determined that an individual has achieved specific learning outcomes relative to a given standard” (Lumina Foundation, 2015).

• “…a verification of qualification of competence issued to an individual by a third party with relevant authority....” (U.S. Department of Labor, 2010)

• Diplomas, certificates, degrees, licenses, certifications, and badges
Why is everyone talking about credentials?

• The growing interest in credentials reflects an important shift in focus in education policy.
  – Beyond access and affordability to a focus on completion and transitions into the labor market
  – A rethinking of what quality is in relation to higher education
  – And a fundamental rethinking of how higher education relates to other approaches for building skills and knowledge
What changed?

• Demand Side:
  o Rising credential requirements for jobs
  o Driving increasing demand for postsecondary credentials

• Supply Side
  o Increase in the numbers and types of credentials available in the marketplace
  o Increasing cost (and risk)

• New opportunities to design and deliver credentials – linked to advances in educational technology
  o Technology-enabled instructional design
  o Digital credentials
What do we want from credentials?

1. Mobility
2. Validation
3. Communication
4. Guidance
Key questions for policymakers

• Does a credential policy or practice
  – Support student transitions through higher education?
    • Transfer policies
  – Support transitions into the labor market?
    • Employment and earnings outcomes
    • Alignment with industry standards...
  – Make the credential more communicative?
  – Expand the scope of learning or competency that can be validated and credentialed?
    • Allow students to get credit for learning outside of formal higher education
  – Simplify, make credentials more coherent, consistent, consumer friendly...
  – Help students make good choices.
  – Protect consumers and hold institutions accountable for credentials that don’t support mobility...?
Who makes theses policies?

• Policymaking in relation to credentials is highly fragmented, decentralized, silo-ed, duplicative, byzantine, ......
  – Institutions
  – Professional societies, industry associations, licensing boards
  – Accreditors (and speciality accreditors)
  – State governments
  – The federal government
# Major Types and Issuers of Credentials

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<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Education &amp; Training Providers</th>
<th>Higher Ed 2-year</th>
<th>Higher Ed 4-year</th>
<th>Govt.</th>
<th>Industry &amp; Prof. Assoc.</th>
<th>Employer</th>
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Federal Government
State Governments
Accreditors
Institutions
Professional Societies & Industry Associations
Alternative Education Providers

CREDENTIALS
Degrees, Certificates, Badges, Certifications, Licenses