

Higher Learning Commission

Trends and Updates


Through the HLC Lens

Karen J Solomon, Vice President and Chief Transformation Officer | CATYC Annual Conference | September 24, 2024

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Updates

- Trends
- Updates
 - Student Success
 - Substantive Change
 - Credential Lab



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Trends 2024

- Artificial Intelligence (AI) – Promises, Opportunities, and Threats
- Teaching, Learning and Enrollment Paradigm Shifts
- Outcomes and Accountability for Programs and Institutions
- Financial Challenges and Opportunities Across All Sectors
- New Business Models Emerging for Innovation and Sustainability
- Exponential Growth of Short-Term Credentials and New Providers



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Trends 2024 (continued)

- Politicization of Higher Education, Increased External Interventions
- Speaking Out: Conflicting Voices, Civility and Safety on Campuses
- Mental Health Challenges Continue – Impact and Oversight
- Talent Management and Succession Planning: Colleges Need to Be Ready for Turnover at All Levels
- The Important Role of Leadership: Challenges and Continuity
- Accreditation and the Influence of the Triad



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Student Success

- Revised Criteria expect benchmarks that reference peer institutions
- Multi-phase initiative
 - Phase I focused on three educational measures:
 - ✓ First-year retention rate
 - ✓ Graduation rate within 150% of normal time
 - ✓ Completion and transfer rate at 8 years after entry to college

Higher Learning Commission https://download.hlcommission.org/EvaluatingOutcomesPhase1Update_2024-05_PRC.pdf

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Phase I Survey Analysis

Table 3. Number of Institutions That Will Be Surveyed

Peer Group	Number of Institutions		
	Total In Peer Group	With 1+ Measure Within Lowest 5th Percentile* (% of group)	With 1+ Measure More than 1SD Below Mean** (% of group)
Two-Year	321	42 (13.08%)	57 (17.76%)
Tribal Colleges	26	5 (19.23%)	4 (15.38%)
Four-Year, Selective	274	25 (9.12%)	39 (14.23%)
Four-Year, Inclusive	274	35 (12.77%)	45 (16.42%)
Totals	895	107 (11.96%)	145 (16.20%)

* These institutions will be required to complete the survey on outcome measures.
 ** These institutions will be asked, but not required, to complete the survey on outcome measures.

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Phase II


Move beyond educational outcomes to analyses of post-college labor market and other economic outcomes such as:

- post-graduation employment rates,
- median earnings,
- federal loan repayment rates
- and median total debt after graduation, among others.


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Substantive Change



Evolution of Bachelor's Degrees
 Reduced-Time Bachelor's Degree
 Reduced-Credit Bachelor's Degree



Distance Education




Teach Out
 Updating Guidance Document

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Evolving Bachelor's Degrees

- Stackable
- Reduced Time to Degree
 - Less than the typical four years
- Reduced Credits to Degree
 - Less than recognized standard of at least 120 credits
- Requires review by accrediting agency




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Reduced-Credit Bachelor's Degree

...a program in which the number of credit hours required to complete the program is less than the commonly accepted minimum program length specified in HLC's Assumed Practices.

Institutions offering a degree program at less than this commonly accepted minimum program length must explain and justify the variation.

For a bachelor's degree program, the commonly accepted minimum program length is 120 semester credits.



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Distance Education - Key Issues to Watch

Distance Education

- Categorizes distance education programs into a "virtual location".
- Disallows Title IV aid for asynchronous distance education courses for clock-hour programs.
- Define a distance education course.
- Collect new data about student participation and completion of distance education programs.

Return to Title IV (R2T4)

- Requires an institution to take attendance for each course offered entirely through distance education, except dissertation research for doctoral programs.
- As a result of attendance taking, document within 14 days of a student's last date of attendance the student's withdrawal date.




(WCET Breaking News 7/18/2024)

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Distance Education

- Final rules likely released November 1st
- Anticipated to go into effect on July 1, 2025

<https://www2.ed.gov/policy/highered/reg/heardulemaking/2023/program-integrity-nprm.pdf>



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HLC's Credential Lab
Helping Navigate the Evolving Learn & Work Ecosystem

<https://www.hlcommission.org/News-Reports/credential-lab.html>

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HLC's Credential Lab

HLC's innovation hub that supports credential providers, colleges and universities, employers, and learners in navigating the complex and growing ecosystem of postsecondary short-term credentials.

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Definitions - Microcredentials

Microcredentials are short, focused credentials designed to provide in-demand skills, know-how and experience. Stackable microcredentials can also provide a pathway to a certificate or full degree, now or when you are ready. (www.suny.edu)

Macro-credentials are college/university degrees and college and graduate certificates, while micro-credentials are a type of digital credential that verifies competency in a specific skill or set of skills (Brown, Mhichil, Beirne, & Mac Lochlainn, 2021; Tinsley et al., 2022 via digitalpromise.org).

Competency or skills-based recognition that allows a learner to demonstrate mastery and learning in a particular area. Less than a full degree or certificate; it is a segment of learning achievement or outcome. Should be certified by a recognized authority. (aacrao.org)

Microcredentials are a record of focused learning achievement verifying what the learner knows, understands, or can do. They include an assessment based on clearly defined standards and are awarded by a trusted provider. They have stand-alone value and may also contribute to or complement other micro-credentials or macro-credentials, including through recognition of prior learning. They meet the standards required by relevant quality assurance. (www.learnworkecosystemlibrary.com)

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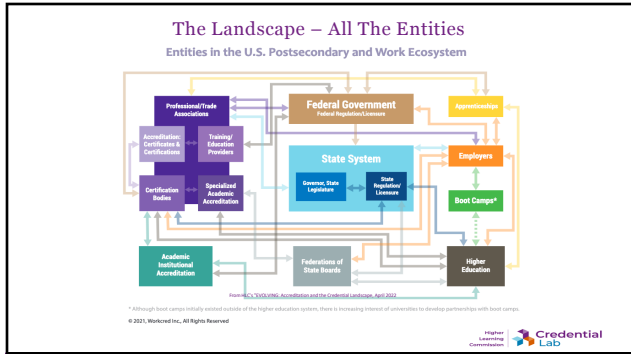
The Landscape – All The Credentials

40+ million learners in the US have some credit but no credential to show for it (and this does not include graduate-level learners).

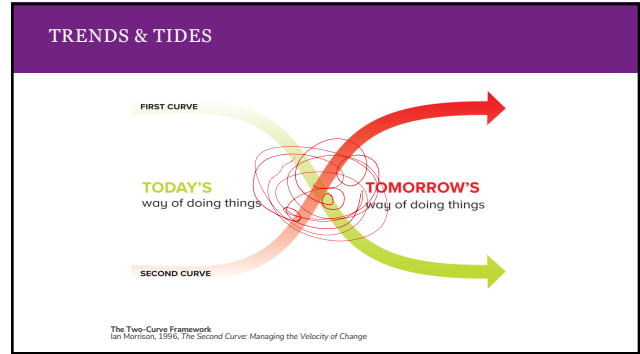
How can we acknowledge this challenge – and also “count” this learning?

From [CredentialAsYouGo](https://credentialasyougo.org):
<https://credentialasyougo.org>

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What's Needed

- Learners** need high-quality credentials that build skills, stack toward degrees or other credentials, support mobility, and provide on-ramps and off-ramps to further education and employment.
- Employers, industries, and workforce development organizations** need reliable information about credentials and education and training providers.
- Colleges and universities** need support and guidance in engaging in high quality external partnerships and transforming their institutional offerings to meet the needs of the 21st century learn-work ecosystem.

While there are an increasing number of kinds of credentials - and external content providers - emerging to fill these gaps, there is also an overwhelming need to assure quality and to dramatically improve transparency in the ever-growing credential marketplace.

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Organizations & Institutions Represented

- 1EdTech
- AACRAO
- Association for Talent Development
- Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges
- Colorado Department of Higher Education
- Competency-Based Education Network
- Credential As You Go
- Credential Engine
- Education Design Lab
- JobsOhio
- League for Innovation in the Community College
- Learn & Work Ecosystem Library
- LinkedIn
- Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity
- Muzzy Lane
- Siemens Healthineers
- Strada Education Foundation
- The Burning Glass Institute
- Workcred
- Arizona State University
- Clark State College
- Colorado Mountain College
- Columbia Law School
- Dallas College
- George Washington University
- Mount Marty University
- Oklahoma City Community College
- Pima Community College
- The Ohio State University
- The University of Texas System
- University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus
- University of Colorado Boulder
- University of Wisconsin Milwaukee
- University of Wisconsin System (retired)
- Washington University in St. Louis
- Western Governors University
- Westminster College

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The Credential Lab's Two Initial Offerings

Microcredential Provider Review & Endorsement

- Quality Assurance of Organizations
- Trusted providers identified through "HLC Endorsement"
- Voluntary

Under Construction!

Credential Lab Innovation Center

- Resources & Tools
- Networking
- Training and Technical Assistance
- Employer and Provider Support


Coming soon!

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Additional Resources


- Credential As You Go**
- credentialasyougo.org
- Credential Engine**
- credentialengine.org
- Learn & Work Ecosystem Library**
- learnworkecosystemlibrary.com



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Other topics to explore....

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