



#credovation

CONVERGENCE

CREDENTIAL INNOVATION IN
HIGHER EDUCATION

OCTOBER 13–15, 2026
WASHINGTON, DC


UPCEA
A Joint Presentation

 **AACRAO**

WELCOME TO CONVERGENCE:

Credential Innovation in Higher Education

Welcome to the fourth annual Convergence: Credential Innovation in Higher Education, a gathering of higher education leaders and partners working to create more connected and meaningful pathways for learners.

Credential innovation continues to evolve rapidly, and this year's Convergence reflects both the opportunities ahead and the practical questions institutions are working to solve today. How can we better connect credit and noncredit learning? How can credentials support learner mobility and respond to workforce needs? What policies, technologies, data, and institutional structures are needed to move promising ideas from pilots to sustainable practice?

The continued partnership between UPCEA and AACRAO reflects our shared commitment to helping higher education address these questions. What makes Convergence distinctive is the opportunity to bring together perspectives from across our field, creating space to learn from one another, challenge assumptions, and find new ways to advance this work. Apart from Convergence, the collaboration is resulting in practical progress on ecosystem issues, like guidance on the expansion of the definition of a student and on a CPL guidebook that will be released at the end of the calendar year.

Throughout the conference, you'll explore topics including learner mobility and credit for prior learning, digital credentials and skills, workforce and community partnerships, policy and data, and the systems needed to build and scale credential innovation. General sessions, concurrent sessions, roundtables, and informal conversations offer opportunities to learn from colleagues at different stages of this work, exchange ideas, and consider what these approaches could mean for your own institution.

We are deeply grateful for the vision and leadership of the UPCEA Council for Credential Innovation, which acts as advisory group for Convergence, the generous support of our sponsors and exhibitors, our Convergence Promotional Partners, and the dedicated teams from UPCEA and AACRAO who make this gathering possible.

As you take part in Convergence, we encourage you to ask questions, make new connections, share what is working and what remains challenging, and bring new ideas back to your institution. By working across traditional boundaries, we can help create pathways that make learning more visible, portable, and valuable throughout a learner's education and career.

Sincerely,

Bob Hansen
CEO, UPCEA

Melanie Gottlieb
Executive Director, AACRAO

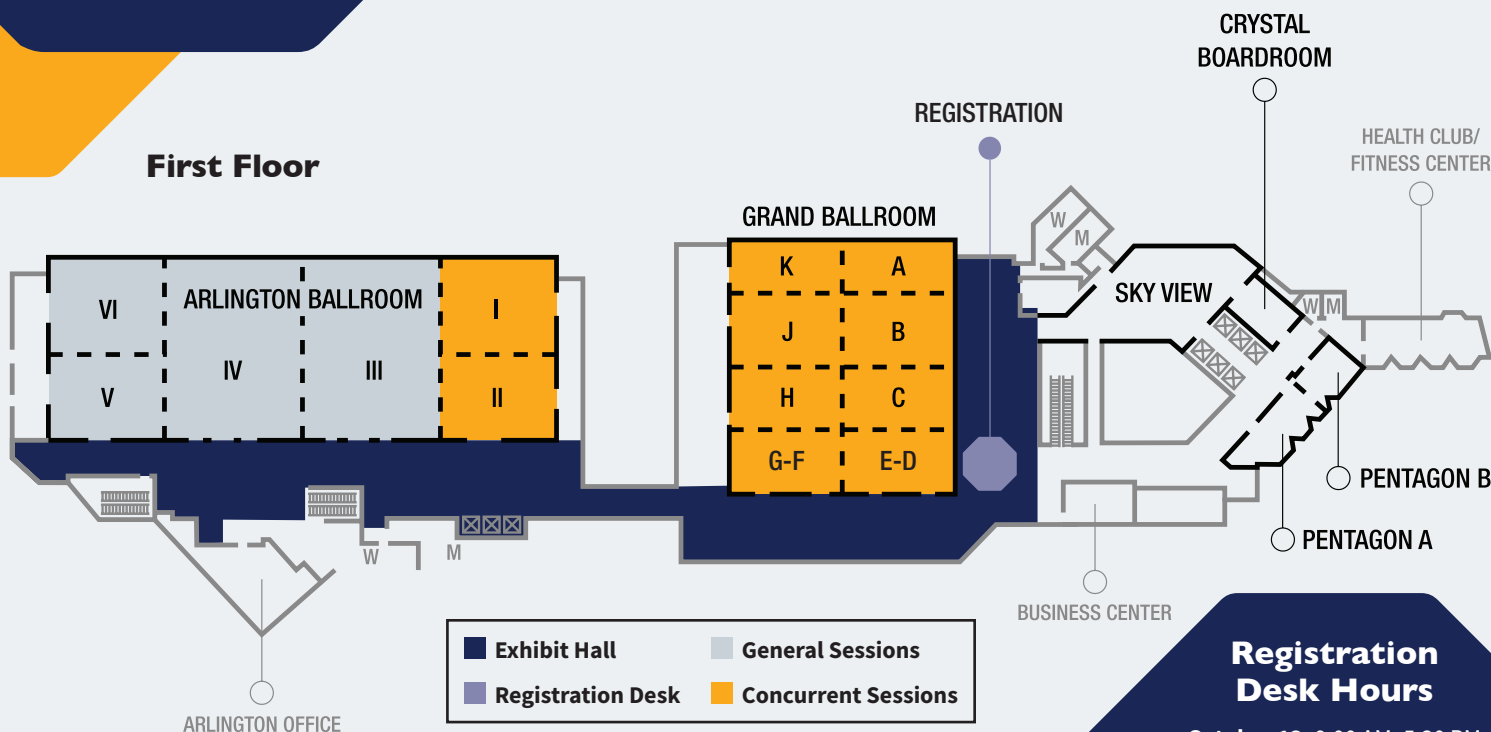
UPCEA Council for Credential Innovation

Thank you to the 2026–27 CCI for all of your hard work on this year's event!

Jack Rodenfels, North Carolina State University (*co-chair*)
Amber O'Casey, Alamo Community Colleges District (*co-chair*)
Katherine Antonucci, Arizona State University
Karen Bellnier, Mitchell College
Kristine Bowman, Michigan State University
Benjamin Brand, Johns Hopkins University
Insiya Bream, University of Maryland Global Campus
Keisha Campbell, Morgan State University
Kristine Collins, University of California, Irvine
Saira Cooper, Rice University
Julia Denholm, Simon Fraser University
Amy Feest, Southern Connecticut State University
Tim Gilrain, Villanova University
Ronnie Godshalk, Georgia Institute of Technology
Jeremy Lingle, University of Colorado Denver
Carissa Little, Stanford University
Melissa Lubin, University of Virginia
Jessica Metzler, Providence College
Kimberly Moore, Wichita State University
Jill Pippin, SUNY Oswego
Cate Tolnai, University of Phoenix
Amy Heitzman, UPCEA (*ex officio*)

VENUE FLOORPLAN

First Floor



How to Use this Program

For the most robust experience, be sure to reference this program alongside the conference app and/or conference website on your phone, tablet, or laptop for full session descriptions, information about our conference exhibitors, and more. The conference website can be found at upcea.edu/convergence.

To help you find the sessions that are right for you, conference sessions are marked with a track, a tag, and a level. Use the sidebars in the Schedule section to determine which sessions you plan to attend.

Session rooms can fill up, so make a note of a few sessions you're interested in attending for each session block in the event that your first choice session is full.

UPCEA and AACRAO are not liable and accept no responsibility for any accidents, injuries, or losses pursuant to imbibing alcoholic beverages or for any other reason on or off premises at Convergence.

Conference App

Create your own schedule, connect with your fellow attendees, and stay up-to-date with announcements and schedule changes with the 2026 Convergence app.

Download Guidebook in the Apple App Store or Google Play, visit guidebook.com, or scan the QR code below.

After the app downloads, open it. Then search for and select "2026 Convergence—Washington, DC".



Scan QR code to download the conference app

Registration Desk Hours

October 13: 9:00 AM–5:30 PM
October 14: 8:00 AM–5:00 PM
October 15: 7:15 AM–11:15 AM

Exhibitor Hours

October 13: 11:00 AM–7:00 PM
October 14: 8:00 AM–5:00 PM
October 15: 7:15 AM–11:15 AM

WiFi

Get online at the conference with free wireless internet in all meeting and session rooms, as well as the conference exhibitor area.

Network: MarriottBonvoy_Conference
Password: ISACA26

Thank you to our WiFi sponsor



Social Media

Continue the conversation online with fellow attendees and speakers during and between sessions. Use **#credovation** online to stay in touch!

CREDENTIAL MATURITY INDEX

UPCEA has identified eight pillars that define what it means to lead credential innovation in higher education, distilled as the **UPCEA Hallmarks of Excellence in Credential Innovation**. These pillars, or best practices, are a collection of aspirational markers that can help guide institutions as they integrate their universities with the needs of employers and professions with agility, transparency, and accountability.

The Hallmarks of Excellence are available as a free, downloadable resource, and members of the UPCEA and AACRAO community are welcomed to use them in any number of ways. In addition, Convergence attendees have a specific, additive opportunity for engaging with the Hallmarks of Excellence, curated by the event's Advisory Group.

Recognizing that each institution is approaching this work uniquely, and therefore has unique needs and resources, we invite you to engage with a maturity index, based on the Hallmarks of

Excellence in Credential Innovation. This index will help individuals assess their unit or institutional efforts around alternative credential development for purposes of gauging relative prowess in a particular area, to consider growth potential, to assess gaps, and for purposes of continual improvement.

Index respondents will receive a set of scores for their unit or institution, correlated to each of the eight Hallmarks of Excellence,

which they may use to seek further professional development, resources, or networking opportunities. Attendees of Convergence 2026 will have opportunities to use the results of this index in two ways:

- **Customize engagement plans with the Convergence 2026 program:**
Each concurrent session has been "tagged" with two of the eight Hallmarks with which it is most closely affiliated in terms of content, so attendees can quickly identify sessions to meet their specific needs. These tags will also be noted in the event's mobile app, a feature of which is the opportunity to build a customized schedule.
- **Cultivate onsite networking goals:**
Through Speed-Meeting, Peer Learning Lounge and Promotional Partner Stop & Share, and an evening social event, attendees will have ample opportunities to expand their professional networks

Explore the Credential Maturity Index and access the Hallmarks at upcea.edu/maturityindex.

We suggest having a copy of the Hallmarks of Excellence in Credential Innovation downloaded before you begin, setting aside around 20 minutes to go through the index, and either working through the index with colleagues or sharing results with them after the fact.

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World-class

Students access career training programs from industry leaders in GenAI, cybersecurity, data analytics, marketing, engineering, and more.

Job-relevant

Students meet employer demand with skills development training aligned to specific roles.

Entry-level

Students build job confidence, hone critical skills, and create a portfolio of work that showcases readiness.



UPCEA extends our deepest gratitude to each of our corporate partners for their support throughout the year. Learn more about UPCEA's Partners at upcea.edu/partners.

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TRACK



Credential Innovation Foundations



Digital Credentials & Skills Ecosystems



Learner Mobility: Pathways, Transfer & CPL



Strategy, Systems & Scaling Transformation



Workforce & Community Partnerships

TAG



Employer Engagement



Faculty



Learner Access



Policy



Technology

LEVELS



New



Building



Advanced



Scaling



Hallmarks of Excellence in Credential Innovation

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 13

9:00 AM–5:30 PM

Registration Open

Location: Grand Registration

10:00 AM–11:30 AM

Chief Credential Innovation Officer Convening | Systems of Trust: Aligning State Frameworks, Academic Records, and an Architecture for Credentials of Value

Location: Grand C

Attendance at the CCIO Convening is by invitation only; pre-registration required.

The annual convening of representatives to the UPCEA Council for Credential Innovation (CCI) will engage senior leaders in a working session focused on defining, measuring, and strengthening the market value of alternative postsecondary credentials. Participants will analyze how non-degree qualifications transfer from campus records into corporate hiring systems, with a particular focus on the expanding role of states in validating “credentials of value.” The conversation will explore how state public sector hiring rules, state-funded training lists, and workforce funding pathways require institutions to translate academic records into data structures that align with both state policies and automated corporate screening workflows.

Sponsored by:

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11:00 AM–11:30 AM

Optional Speed-Meeting/Newcomers Welcome

Location: Arlington II

Whether you’re brand-new to Convergence or making your return, this session is your chance to get oriented without the stress. You’ll learn a few insider tips for navigating the conference, meet attendees who are also building their networks, and get to know leaders who can point you toward the sessions, and people most relevant to your work. Plus, you’ll leave with a few new contacts (and maybe even lunch plans) before the conference is fully underway.

11:00 AM–7:00 PM

Exhibit Hall Open

Location: Arlington Foyer

11:45 AM–1:00 PM

Lunch on Your Own

There are many options for lunch within walking distance of the Crystal Gateway Marriott, including:

- Colada Shop (244 19th Court South, #35)
- Good Stuff Eatery (2110 Crystal Drive)
- Makers Union (1450 South Eads Street, Suite 65)
- McCormick & Schmick’s Seafood & Steaks (2010 Crystal Drive)
- NiHao Arlington (1550 Crystal Drive, Suite F)
- Queen Mother’s Kitchen (1711 Crystal Drive)
- Tacombi (1550 Crystal Drive)
- Tatte Bakery & Cafe | National Landing (269 19th Court South, Suite 65)
- Ted’s Montana Grill (2200 Crystal Drive)

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1:15 PM–2:30 PM

Opening General Session | The Future of Learning and Work: Building a Mobility-Ready Credential Ecosystem

Location: Arlington Ballroom III-VI



Heitzman



Gottlieb



Spears



Wold-McCormick

Higher education is entering a new era where learning no longer happens in a single institution—or a single stage of life. Learners increasingly accumulate knowledge and skills across universities, workplaces, and credentials. Yet the systems that document and recognize learning remain largely institution-bound.

In this opening conversation, Amy Heitzman and Melanie Gottlieb explore what the future of learning and work demands from higher education and how institutions must evolve to meet it. From learner mobility and skills recognition to digital records and integrated credit and noncredit pathways, they will examine the infrastructure required to support lifelong learners.

The conversation will be followed by a moderated panel featuring institutional leaders who are actively redesigning systems to make learning more portable, transparent, and connected to opportunity.

- **Amy Heitzman**, UPEA
- **Melanie Gottlieb**, AACRAO

Panelists:

- **Julia Spears**, Marshall University
- **Kristi Wold-McCormick**, University of Colorado, Boulder

2:30 PM–3:00 PM

Networking Break: Visit Exhibit Hall

Location: Arlington Foyer

An apple a day gets the conference underway. Join our exhibitors for some good conversation and an autumnal treat!

Sponsored by:



3:00 PM–4:00 PM

CONCURRENT SESSIONS I

Aligning Microcredential Strategy with Federal and State Policy Updates

Location: Arlington I



Professionalism,
Internal Advocacy

- **Ricky LaFosse**, University of Michigan
- **Ryan Torma**, University of Minnesota
- **Moderator: Derrick Perry**, The University of Texas at Arlington

From Concept to Coalition: Building Scalable Credential Systems Through Statewide Collaboration

Location: Grand FG



External Advocacy,
Entrepreneurial Initiatives

- **Ashley Doehling**, Kennesaw State University
- **Jake Kile**, Kennesaw State University
- **Moderator: Sarah MacDonald**, James Madison University

Bridging the Divide: Closing the Credit/Noncredit Gap in Student Information and Credentialing Systems

Location: Arlington II



Digital Technology,
Learner Experience

- **Mike Simmons**, AACRAO
- **Arthur Thomas**, Syracuse University
- **Kristi Wold-McCormick**, University of Colorado, Boulder
- **Moderator: Julie Uranis**, UPEA

Where to find session slides

On Mobile

Open the Guidebook app, and search for and open the “2026 Convergence—Washington, DC” guide. Use the three horizontal bar button in the top left to open the menu, and then select “Schedule”. From the schedule, select a session. Scroll down below the session description, and look for the “PDFs” section. If speakers have submitted their slides, “Session Slides” will be shown in the “PDFs” section, which you can then open and view.

On Browser

Visit upcea.edu/convergence in your browser. Click “Mobile App” in the right side navigation. Select the guide, and then click “Schedule” in the left side navigation bar. Look for the text “Other device users, including desktop users, can access the same information via our app website here.” and click “via our app website here” to open the app in your browser. Then click “Schedule” in the left side navigation bar on the app website. From the schedule, select a session. Scroll down below the session description, and look for the “PDFs” section. If speakers have submitted their slides, “Session Slides” will be shown in the “PDFs” section, which you can then open, view, and download/save.

Building a Stackable Credential Framework That Scales

Location: Grand B



Internal Advocacy,
Learner Experience

- **Brittany Holmes**, Arizona State University
- **Michael Low**, Arizona State University
- **Moderator: Elizabeth Wood**, MindEdge

Concurrent Session block continues ►

SCHEDULE

View full session details in the conference app or at upcea.edu/convergence.

TRACK

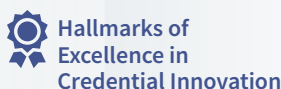
-  Credential Innovation Foundations
-  Digital Credentials & Skills Ecosystems
-  Learner Mobility: Pathways, Transfer & CPL
-  Strategy, Systems & Scaling Transformation
-  Workforce & Community Partnerships

TAG

-  Employer Engagement
-  Faculty
-  Learner Access
-  Policy
-  Technology

LEVELS

-  New
-  Building
-  Advanced
-  Scaling



◀ 3:00 PM–4:00 PM
Concurrent Session I continued

Connecting Value Chains for Mobility: CPL to Skills to Microcredentials

Location: Grand K



 Learner Experience,
Digital Technology

- **Marc Booker**, University of Phoenix
- **Cate Tolnai**, University of Phoenix
- **Moderator: Susan Biro**, University of Maryland Baltimore County

Durable Citizenship Skills: A Framework for Mapping Civic Learning to Microcredentials

Location: Grand A



 Professionalism,
Learner Experience

- **Joshua Blakely**, Longwood University
- **Anna Kuthy**, Longwood University
- **Moderator: Connie Newsome**, Campbell School of Law

No One Innovates Alone: Creating the Networks that Advance Credential Innovation

Location: Grand C



 Internal Advocacy,
External Advocacy

- **John McKenzie**, UNT Health Fort Worth
- **Alex Lowrie**, University of California, Davis
- **Amy Mackenroth**, Dallas College
- **Erin Riesgo**, University of Arizona
- **Saira Cooper**, Rice University
- **Elizabeth Kerr**, University of Cincinnati
- **Moderator: Melissa Peraino**, UPCEA

Past the Pilot: What Michigan, Iowa State, and Johns Hopkins Are Rethinking

Location: Grand H



 Internal Advocacy,
Entrepreneurial Initiatives

- **Janet Schreck**, Johns Hopkins University
- **Tanya Austin**, Iowa State University
- **Nola Czarnik**, University of Michigan
- **Ryan Greives**, Accredible
- **Moderator: Ryan Greives**, Accredible

Reimagining Degree Completion Through AI-Enabled Prior Learning Assessment: A Case Study from Manhattan School of Music

Location: Grand J



 Learner Experience,
Digital Technology

- **Lisa Springer**, EIE Partners
- **Fiona Jaramillo**, EIE Partners
- **Joyce Griggs**, Manhattan School of Music
- **Moderator: Tamara VonGeorge**, University of New Hampshire

The Best Marketing You Don't Pay For: When Students Sell the Program for You

Location: Grand DE



 Learner Experience,
Entrepreneurial Initiatives

- **Warren Ward**, Louisiana Tech University
- **Lindsey Vincent**, Louisiana Tech University
- **Joseph Mauriello**, The University of Texas at Dallas
- **Matthew Paske**, The University of Texas at Dallas
- **Moderator: Karina Kogan**, EducationDynamics

4:15 PM–5:15 PM

CONCURRENT SESSIONS II

All Privacy Counts: Expanding the Scope of FERPA to a Broader Base of Learners

Location: Arlington II



External Advocacy,
Professionalism

- **Kristi Wold-McCormick**, University of Colorado Boulder
- **Julie Uranis**, UPCEA
- **Moderator: Whitney Stout**, West Virginia University

Better Data, Better Outcomes: How Data Can Transform Non-Degree Programs

Location: Grand K



Professionalism,
Internal Advocacy

- **Chris White**, SUNY System Administration
- **Kate Smalkin**, CredLens
- **Moderator: Kate Smalkin**, CredLens

Building Career Readiness Capacities at HBCUs

Location: Grand DE



Faculty Experience,
Internal Advocacy

- **Forrest Black**, Virginia State University
- **Kristy Williams**, Jackson State University
- **Elizabeth Robertson Hornsby**, Coursera for Campus
- **Moderator: Jessica Metzler**, Providence College

Building Microcredentials Employers Hire From: Lessons from Texas State University & WGU

Location: Arlington I



U2B Stakeholder Engagement,
Professionalism

- **Eryn Berger**, Texas State University
- **Bonnie Budd**, Western Governors University
- **Amy Shackelford**, CodeSignal
- **Moderator: Amy Shackelford**, CodeSignal

Building New Pathways—How Alternative Credentials Are Reshaping Higher Education

Location: Grand J



Internal Advocacy,
Professionalism

- **Melanie Diaz**, ABET, Inc.
- **Thomas Singer**, Sinclair College
- **Moderator: Sandy Nelson**, University of Minnesota

From Learning to Labor Market: Building Infrastructure for Workforce Pell

Location: Grand B



Digital Technology,
Learner Experience

- **Keith Look**, Territorium
- **Kimberly Lea**, Palm Beach State College
- **Moderator: Kimberly Moore**, Wichita State University

Concurrent Session block continues ►

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SCHEDULE

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TRACK

-  Credential Innovation Foundations
-  Digital Credentials & Skills Ecosystems
-  Learner Mobility: Pathways, Transfer & CPL
-  Strategy, Systems & Scaling Transformation
-  Workforce & Community Partnerships

TAG

-  Employer Engagement
-  Faculty
-  Learner Access
-  Policy
-  Technology

LEVELS

-  New
-  Building
-  Advanced
-  Scaling

 Hallmarks of Excellence in Credential Innovation

◀ 4:15 PM–5:15 PM
Concurrent Session II continued

From Planning to Pathways: Lessons from the National LER Accelerator on Implementing Learner Mobility

Location: Grand C



 Digital Technology, Learner Experience

- **Trevor Cox**, University of Central Oklahoma
- **Mike Simmons**, AACRAO
- **Julie Johnson**, StrategyForward Advisors
- **Kylah Torre**, StrategyForward Advisors
- **Moderator: Michelle Mott**, AACRAO

Nondegree Paths: Hype or Hope?

Location: Grand FG



 Learner Experience, U2B Stakeholder Engagement

- **Aisha Francis**, Franklin Cummings Tech
- **Kerry McKittrick**, Harvard University
- **Ebony Thomas**, Grads of Life
- **Joe Davis**, Education Design Lab
- **Moderator: Julie Kreiss**, Britebound

Using AI to Support Credit for Prior Learning: What We Built, What We Learned, and What Comes Next

Location: Grand H



 Professionalism, Internal Advocacy

- **Carrie Roberson**, Academic Senate for California Community Colleges
- **Cassie Donnelly**, Foundation for California Community Colleges
- **Moderator: Cassie Donnelly**, Foundation for California Community Colleges

ROUNDTABLE PRESENTATIONS

Location: Arlington Ballroom III-VI

In this session, attendees will have the opportunity to engage with up to two different topics during small-group, 30-minute, table-based guided discussion around a specific and timely topic, question, or issue. Roundtables are designed to provide space and time to important but particularly nuanced topics which deserve attention, and presenters will promote the sharing of thoughts, solutions, and questions among their respective table's attendees.

- **Moderator: Jill Pippin**, SUNY Oswego

1 Building a Dual Enrollment Lab School from Scratch Across Modalities



- **Lisa Stoneman**, Roanoke College
- **Natasha Watts**, Roanoke College
- **Rebecca Goldstein**, Roanoke College

2 Building Stackable Micro-Credential Pathways Through Systems Design



- **Stephanie Molina**, Nevada State University

3 Cyber Security, Teaching Modalities and Fulbright Specialist Support



- **Michael Losavio**, University of Louisville
- **Andrew Wright**, University of Louisville
- **Jeffrey Sun**, University of Louisville

4 Everyone Supports It—But Who Owns It? Credential Innovation from Pilot to Institutionalization



- **Samantha Gurski**, Columbus State University

5 Full Circle Microcredentialing: How to Design a Microcredential That Stands up to the CPL Challenge



- **Shanna Coles**, *The University of North Carolina at Charlotte*

6 Lost in Translation: How to Talk About LERs and Edtech Innovation Without Losing Your Audience



- **Amanda Winters**, *United States Chamber of Commerce Foundation*

7 Scaling Credit Mobility Statewide: Lessons Learned when Implementing a Credit for Prior Learning Platform



- **Jaime Wadowiec**, *Technical College System of Georgia*

8 Two Paths to Digital Credentials: What 43 Canadian Registrars and IT Directors Reveal About Acceptance, Implementation, and the Trust Gap



- **T. Nevine Chawra**, *University of Toronto*

9 Using the Equity Leadership Innovation Cycle to Build Institutional Readiness for Credential Innovation



- **Quentin Mason**, *Purdue Global*

10 What Could Go Wrong? Surfacing and Mitigating the Risks of Digital Verifiable Learning and Work Records and Credentials



- **Darin Hobbs**, *Western Governors University*
- **Kelly Page**, *LWYL Studio*
- **Lauren Runco Bevilacqua**, *SOLID Inc.*

11 What Do Credentials Actually Reward? How Badge Design Shapes Participation



- **Abby Harris**, *Nightingale College*
- **Richard West**, *Brigham Young University*

5:30 PM

Opening Reception

Location: Arlington Foyer

Whet your appetite for networking at tonight's Opening Reception. Join the Convergence conference exhibitors and your colleagues to discuss pressing issues in the field, and connect with friends old and new!

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 14

8:00 AM–5:00 PM

Registration Open

Location: Grand Registration

8:00 AM–8:30 AM

Breakfast

Location: Arlington Foyer

Grab breakfast and mingle with exhibitors before heading to the morning's sessions.

8:00 AM–5:00 PM

Exhibit Hall Open

Location: Arlington Foyer

8:30 AM–9:30 AM

CONCURRENT SESSIONS III

Building Workforce Partnerships Through the Workforce Futures Accelerator

Location: Grand DE



 *U2B Stakeholder Engagement, Entrepreneurial Initiatives*

- **Steve Jurch**, *Association of Community College Trustees*
- **Mara Woody**, *Riipen*
- **Moderator: Steve Jurch**, *Association of Community College Trustees*

Counting All Credentials: Program Discoverability in an AI-Driven Marketplace

Location: Arlington II



 *Digital Technology, External Advocacy*

- **Deb Everhart**, *Credential Engine*
- **Andrew Fisher**, *Bristol Community College*
- **Sasha Goldman**, *Northeastern University*
- **Jenny Harms**, *Accelerate Montana*
- **Moderator: Aaron Lawrence**, *SmartBrief*

Concurrent Session block continues ►

SCHEDULE

View full session details in the conference app or at upcea.edu/convergence.

TRACK

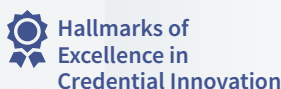
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TAG

-  Employer Engagement
-  Faculty
-  Learner Access
-  Policy
-  Technology

LEVELS

-  New
-  Building
-  Advanced
-  Scaling



◀ 8:30 AM–9:30 AM
Concurrent Session III continued

Designing Employer-Aligned Pathways: Advancing Workforce Alignment, Credential Innovation, and Market Relevance

Location: Arlington I



 U2B Stakeholder Engagement,
Entrepreneurial Initiatives

- **Christopher D'Imperio**, Elizabethtown College
- **Keri Straub**, Elizabethtown College
- **Marcy McCarty**, Elizabethtown College
- **Moderator: Yimin Wang**, University of Indianapolis

Extension as the Engine: A Scalable Model for Co-Developing Workforce-Aligned Microcredentials

Location: Grand A



 Faculty Experience,
Professionalism

- **M. Scarlett Tudor**, University of Maine
- **Melissa Malmstedt**, University of Maine
- **Mari Glatter**, University of Maine
- **Laura Wilson**, University of Maine
- **Moderator: Laura Wilson**, University of Maine

From Content-First to Learner-First: An Agile Approach to Microcredentials

Location: Grand B



 Learner Experience,
Entrepreneurial Initiatives

- **Paul Hockett**, Johns Hopkins University
- **Rebecca Federspiel**, Scrum Alliance
- **Moderator: Nola Czarnik**, University of Michigan

Institutional Perspectives on Implementing STEM Microcredentials

Location: Grand FG



 Internal Advocacy, U2B Stakeholder
Engagement

- **Rob Moore**, University of Florida
- **Beth Brunk**, University of Texas at El Paso
- **Ashley Doehling**, Kennesaw State University
- **Anissa Lokey-Vega**, Kennesaw State University
- **Kent Crippen**, University of Florida
- **Moderator: Chera LaForge**, University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign

Learn and Work Ecosystem Library 2.0: A Federated Model of Support

Location: Grand C



 External Advocacy,
Digital Technology

- **Holly Zanville**, Learn & Work Ecosystem Library
- **Julie Uranis**, UPCEA
- **Curtiss Barnes**, 1EdTech Consortium
- **Melanie Gottlieb**, AACRAO
- **Moderator: Isaac Agbeshie-Noye**, Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) Foundation

Map It, Search It, Act on It: Triangulating Student Interest, Job Mapping and Provider Almanacs to Drive Your Institution's Credential Strategy

Location: Grand H



 Entrepreneurial Initiatives, U2B
Stakeholder Engagement

- **Amanda Welsh**, Northeastern University
- **Kerry McKittrick**, Harvard University
- **Richard DeMartino**, Rochester Institute of Technology
- **Moderator: Amanda Welsh**, Northeastern University

Operationalizing Professional Education: Templates, Workflows, and Decision Frameworks for Small Teams

Location: Grand J



 Internal Advocacy,
Entrepreneurial Initiatives

- **Addrienne VanOver**, Miami University
- **Erica Crawford-Noll**, Miami University
- **Moderator: Shauna Cox**, Modern Campus

INSIGHTS & INNOVATION—STRATEGIC PERSPECTIVES FROM UPCEA + AACRAO'S TRUSTED CORPORATE PARTNERS

Location: Grand K

Insights & Innovation offers a fast-paced, thought-provoking look at the ideas and forces reshaping the credential landscape and the ways institutions connect learning, skills, and opportunity. Through a series of concise presentations by experts, attendees will hear fresh perspectives on emerging trends, evolving learner and workforce needs, and new approaches that are challenging higher education leaders to think differently about the future. Designed to spark ideas, this session brings together real-world observations and conversations that can help inform institutional strategy and decision-making. Explore new possibilities, consider different perspectives, and leave with plenty to think about as you shape the next generation of credentials and learner pathways at your institution. Open to all attendees.

- **Moderator: Barbara Kopp Miller**, The University of Toledo

From Launch to Completion The Ongoing Work Credential Programs Are Rarely Staffed For



- **Lucas Cocco Delgado**, Pearson

Finding The True North: How Continuing Education Creates Pathways from Learning to Opportunity



- **Mieke Ridderhof**, Drieam

No Credential Left Behind



- **Jeff Angle**, ISACA

The Skills Currency Shift: How Credential Leaders Can Respond to Rapid Workforce Change



- **Raymond Sass**, Lightcast

9:45 AM–10:30 AM

Morning Brief | From Microcredentials to Meaningful Pathways: Designing Credential Ecosystems That Work for Learners

Location: Arlington Ballroom III-VI



Pippin



Rhoten



Blakely



Ellington



Ali

As institutions expand their use of microcredentials, the challenge is no longer simply creating new credentials—it is designing coherent pathways that connect learning, career readiness, and student success. This session explores how intentional design can transform individual microcredentials into integrated learner experiences that complement academic programs, foster durable skills, and support lifelong learning. Presenters will share practical approaches for designing, developing, and implementing high-quality microcredentials—from creating mentor-guided pathways embedded within degree programs to building replicable processes that help faculty and staff move credential ideas from concept to approval. Attendees will leave with adaptable frameworks, tools, and design strategies to create scalable credential ecosystems that are meaningful for learners, sustainable for institutions, and aligned with workforce needs.

- **Jill Pippin**, SUNY Oswego
- **Melissa Rhoten**, Longwood University
- **Joshua Blakely**, Longwood University
- **Samantha Ellington**, Longwood University
- **Moderator: Asim Ali**, Auburn University

10:30 AM–11:00 AM

Networking Break: Visit Exhibit Hall

Location: Arlington Foyer

Hey, did you miss breakfast? We've got a coffee (or tea) with your name on it. Join our exhibitors to give your morning a jumpstart!

SCHEDULE

View full session details in the conference app or at upcea.edu/convergence.

TRACK

-  Credential Innovation Foundations
-  Digital Credentials & Skills Ecosystems
-  Learner Mobility: Pathways, Transfer & CPL
-  Strategy, Systems & Scaling Transformation
-  Workforce & Community Partnerships

TAG

-  Employer Engagement
-  Faculty
-  Learner Access
-  Policy
-  Technology

LEVELS

-  New
-  Building
-  Advanced
-  Scaling

 Hallmarks of Excellence in Credential Innovation

11:00 AM–12:00 PM

CONCURRENT SESSIONS IV

AI Driven Learning and Global Collaboration in Sustainability Microcredentialing

Location: Grand DE



 Learner Experience,
 Faculty Experience

- **Robyn Hall**, ABET, Inc.
- **Richard Olawoyin**, Oakland University
- **Moderator: Jacqueline Skyrd**, National University

Badgelicious Futurism: Predicting What's Next in #Credovation

Location: Arlington I



 Entrepreneurial Initiatives,
 Professionalism

- **Cate Tolnai**, University of Phoenix
- **Noah Geisel**, University of Colorado Boulder
- **Moderator: Amy Mackenroth**, Dallas College

Building Trust in Microcredentials through Governance and Quality Assurance

Location: Grand H



 Professionalism,
 Internal Advocacy

- **Anna Kuthy**, Longwood University
- **Jeannine Perry**, Longwood University
- **Samantha Ellington**, Longwood University
- **Sarah Tanner-Anderson**, Longwood University
- **Moderator: Desiree Rivera**, ISACA

Building Institution-Wide Skills Infrastructure: A Framework for Curricular Coherence

Location: Grand C



 Internal Advocacy,
 Digital Technology

- **Art Markman**, Minerva Project
- **Dollie Davis**, Minerva University
- **Moderator: Art Markman**, Minerva Project

From Conversation to Co-Creation: Building Employer Partnerships that Drive Credential Innovation

Location: Grand FG



 U2B Stakeholder Engagement,
 Entrepreneurial Initiatives

- **Devin Miles**, Oregon State University Ecampus
- **Eve Canty**, University of Arkansas
- **John McKenzie**, UNT Health Fort Worth
- **Kaley Klaus**, Fort Hays State University
- **Kristen Vanselow**, Florida Gulf Coast University
- **Moderator: Melissa Peraino**, UPCEA

From Stackable to Structured: Building a 'Bricked' Certificate Model for a 90-Credit Degree

Location: Grand J



 Learner Experience,
 Internal Advocacy

- **Amy Burks-Stewart**, UMass Global
- **Kelly Gump**, UMass Global
- **Moderator: Amy Heitzman**, UPCEA

Responding to Critical Workforce Needs and Funding Opportunities Through Partnerships

Location: Grand A



U2B Stakeholder Engagement, Entrepreneurial Initiatives

- **Tifarah Pardue**, Florida Gulf Coast University
- **Kelly Thawley**, Florida Gulf Coast University
- **Moderator: Clark Crowell**, ed2go

Scaling Workforce Learning with a Two-Person Team: Lessons From Awarding 174,000 Credentials Over 5 Years

Location: Arlington II



Digital Technology, Learner Experience

- **Michael Trest**, Jones College
- **Mieke Ridderhof**, Drieam
- **Moderator: Bryce Henckel**, Drieam

Stack, Scale, Serve: Building a Cross-Collaborative Digital Transformation Center

Location: Grand B



Internal Advocacy, Entrepreneurial Initiatives

- **Jeffrey Sun**, University of Louisville
- **Andrew Wright**, University of Louisville
- **Moderator: Michael Losavio**, University of Louisville

Scaling Credit for Prior Learning Across a State System: Lessons from New Hampshire's Multi-Institution Collaboration

Location: Grand K



Internal Advocacy, Learner Experience

- **Tamara VonGeorge**, University of New Hampshire
- **Julie Moser**, University of New Hampshire
- **Moderator: Julie Moser**, University of New Hampshire

12:15 PM–1:45 PM

Lunch and Learn General Session | From Data to Decisions: Aligning Data and Systems for Quality and Impact

Location: Arlington Ballroom III-VI



Pratt Brandt McGill De Andrade



Uranis

This moderated general session brings together state, national, and intermediary perspectives to examine a core challenge in credential innovation: how to ensure data quality, interoperability, and trust across emerging workforce and education systems. As WIOA performance reporting, Learning and Employment Records (LERs), and Workforce Pell eligibility requirements converge, institutions and states are under increasing pressure to align data definitions, validation processes, and outcomes tracking.

The session explores how cross-sector partnerships are tackling these challenges in practice. Panelists will discuss how they are integrating workforce, postsecondary, and skills data systems; navigating federal and state reporting requirements; and building infrastructure that supports both learner mobility and policy compliance.

The conversation will highlight real implementation decisions, trade-offs, and early lessons from the field, with a focus on how data quality impacts funding, credential value, and learner outcomes. Attendees will gain insight into emerging approaches for aligning data ecosystems with workforce policy frameworks and ensuring that short-term credentials meet new standards for transparency and accountability.

- **Portia Pratt**, National Governors' Association
- **Dana Brandt**, Strada Foundation
- **Robin McGill**, Alabama Commission on Higher Education
- **Maya De Andrade**, University of South Alabama
- **Moderator: Julie Uranis**, UPCEA

1:45 PM–2:15 PM

Networking Break: Visit Exhibit Hall

Location: Arlington Foyer

Networking is pretty cool. And so is this break! Come chill out with our exhibitors.

2:15 PM–3:15 PM

CONCURRENT SESSIONS V

A Collaborative Approach to Scaling Microcredentials

Location: Grand K



Digital Technology, Professionalism

- **Jill Pippin**, SUNY Oswego University
- **Moderator: Tracy Robinson**, University of Memphis

Building for Scale: How UMGC Designed a Repeatable CLR Program Onboarding Process

Location: Grand FG



Internal Advocacy, Digital Technology

- **Insiya Bream**, University of Maryland Global Campus
- **Tiffany Barr**, University of Maryland Global Campus
- **Sonja Strahl**, University of Maryland Global Campus
- **Moderator: Bonnie Budd**, Western Governors University

Building Together: Cross-Functional Collaboration for Scalable Learning and Employment Records

Location: Grand H



Internal Advocacy, Digital Technology

- **Sandy Nelson**, University of Minnesota
- **Trevor Cox**, University of Central Oklahoma
- **Moderator: Mieke Rifferhof**, Drieam

Concurrent Session block continues ►

SCHEDULE

View full session details in the conference app or at upcea.edu/convergence.

TRACK

-  Credential Innovation Foundations
-  Digital Credentials & Skills Ecosystems
-  Learner Mobility: Pathways, Transfer & CPL
-  Strategy, Systems & Scaling Transformation
-  Workforce & Community Partnerships

TAG

-  Employer Engagement
-  Faculty
-  Learner Access
-  Policy
-  Technology

LEVELS

-  New
-  Building
-  Advanced
-  Scaling

 Hallmarks of Excellence in Credential Innovation

◀ 2:15 PM–3:15 PM
Concurrent Session V continued

Lessons from a Trusted Career Profile Demonstration

Location: Grand C



 Digital Technology, External Advocacy

- **Madelyn Rahn**, SkillsFWD
- **Gabby Martinez**, Western Governors University
- **Dave Wengel**, SmartResume
- **Amanda Winters**, United States Chamber of Commerce Foundation
- **Moderator: Amanda Winters**, United States Chamber of Commerce Foundation

Microcredentials in Action: Aligning Mission, Learning & Institutional Growth

Location: Grand A



 Internal Advocacy, Entrepreneurial Initiatives

- **Stefanie Heinrich**, Valparaíso University
- **Edward Finn III**, Valparaíso University
- **Moderator: Beth Brunk**, University of Texas at El Paso

Real Programs, Real Lessons, and Actionable Strategies for Building Workforce-Ready Healthcare Programs in Motion with Iterative, Collaborative Design

Location: Grand DE



 U2B Stakeholder Engagement, Professionalism

- **Ashley Seitz Kramer**, University of Utah
- **Jennifer Thatcher**, University of Utah
- **Moderator: Iris Moulton**, University of Utah

Recognizing What Learners Know: Exploring the Full Spectrum of Credit for Prior Learning

Location: Arlington II



 Learner Experience, Internal Advocacy

- **Amber O'Casey**, Alamo Colleges District
- **Jack Rodenfels**, North Carolina State University
- **Cate Tolnai**, University of Phoenix
- **Moderator: Amy Heitzman**, UPCEA

Reengineering Noncredit Data Systems for Workforce Pell and Beyond

Location: Grand J



 Digital Technology, Professionalism

- **Jaime Wadowiec**, Technical College System of Georgia
- **Julie Uranis**, UPCEA
- **Moderator: Sasha Goldman**, Northeastern University

What Employers Need to Trust Credentials: New Research and a Data Model for Skills-Based Hiring

Location: Arlington I



 Digital Technology, U2B Stakeholder Engagement

- **Saira Cooper**, Rice University
- **Rob Coyle**, 1EdTech Consortium
- **Darin Hobbs**, Western Governors University
- **Moderator: Rob Coyle**, 1EdTech Consortium

CONVERGENCE TALKS

Location: Grand B

This session features a variety of presenters offering the quickfire introduction of an idea. Talks will happen in sequence, without audience discussion, to offer attendees numerous, shallow forays into critical topics. A moderated, shared Q&A period will follow all Convergence Talk presentations.

- **Moderator: Deborah Morrison**, Coursera

Access Before Admission: Replicating a Performance-Based Pathway to Graduate Degrees



- **Nicole Miller**, University of Colorado Boulder

Design Education for Opportunity: CE Pathways for Justice-Impacted Learners



- **Marissa Shadburn**, Pratt Institute

What Makes a Microcredential Trustworthy? Five Real-World Examples



- **Jeannine Perry**, Longwood University

3:30 PM–4:45 PM

WORKSHOPS/TOOLBOX SESSIONS

Workshops utilize an extended session time (75 minutes) to provide deep dives for participants to be actively, tangibly engaged in their own learning via collaboration and hands-on interaction.

Beyond the Badge—Governance, Quality, and Credit Pathways for Microcredentials

Location: Arlington I



Professionalism,
Internal Advocacy

- **Nick Swartz**, James Madison University
- **Sarah MacDonald**, James Madison University
- **Anissa Lokey-Vega**, Kennesaw State University
- **Moderator: Tom Kenally**, Pearson

Building Credential Infrastructure: A Co-Design Workshop with the Field

Location: Grand A



Internal Advocacy,
Entrepreneurial Initiatives

- **Kerri Lemoie**, Northeastern University
- **Sasha Goldman**, Northeastern University
- **Moderator: Clare Hall**, Noodle

Employer-Friendly Practices: Meeting Employer Needs

Location: Arlington II



U2B Stakeholder Engagement,
Internal Advocacy

- **Haley Glover**, UpSkill America
- **Jessie Schook**, C-BEN
- **Moderator: Jocelyn Widmer**, Los Alamos National Laboratory

From Idea to Impact: A Five-Phase Framework for Building Workforce-Aligned Microcredentials

Location: Grand DE



Entrepreneurial Initiatives,
Internal Advocacy

- **Kaley Klaus**, Fort Hays State University
- **Jeni McRay**, Fort Hays State University
- **Moderator: Clayton Dean**, Ziplines Education

From Pilots to Systems: Scaling Credential Innovation Through Data, Design, and AI

Location: Grand C



Internal Advocacy,
Learner Experience

- **Jean Starobin**, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
- **Chera LaForge**, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
- **Moderator: Kevin Hitt**, University of South Florida

From Syllabus to Verified Credentials: A Hands-On Workshop for Making Skills Visible

Location: Grand B



Professionalism,
Digital Technology

- **Dakota Horn**, Bradley University
- **Michelle Riggio**, Bradley University
- **Keying Chen**, Digital Promise
- **Meghan Toteno**, Digital Promise
- **Moderator: Liz Remelius**, Villanova University

Mapping Credentials to Curriculum: A Practical Integration Lab

Location: Grand FG



Learner Experience,
Professionalism

- **Sandra Song**, Mapping
- **Mahmood Mortazavi Dehkordi**, University Canada West
- **Joseph Mauriello**, The University of Texas at Dallas
- **Matthew Paske**, The University of Texas at Dallas
- **Moderator: Dan Cavalli**, ISACA

Concurrent Session block continues ►

SCHEDULE

View full session details in the conference app or at upcea.edu/convergence.

TRACK



Credential Innovation Foundations



Digital Credentials & Skills Ecosystems



Learner Mobility: Pathways, Transfer & CPL



Strategy, Systems & Scaling Transformation



Workforce & Community Partnerships

TAG



Employer Engagement



Faculty



Learner Access



Policy



Technology

LEVELS



New



Building



Advanced



Scaling



Hallmarks of Excellence in Credential Innovation

◀ 3:30 PM–4:45 PM

Workshops/Toolbox Sessions continued

Operationalizing Workforce-Connected Credential Pathways: From Stackable Credentials to Employer-Engaged Work-Based Learning

Location: Grand J



Learner Experience, U2B Stakeholder Engagement

- **Beth Hein**, *University of Wisconsin-Stout*
- **Julie Zaloudek**, *University of Wisconsin-Stout*
- **Joe Davis**, *Education Design Lab*
- **Moderator: Mara Woody**, *Riipen*

Show Me What You Got!: Scalable Ways to Recognize Learners From Competencies to Credit.

Location: Grand H



Learner Experience, Professionalism

- **Ryan Specht-Boardman**, *Competency-Based Education Network*
- **Kristen Vanselow**, *Florida Gulf Coast University*
- **Joshua Fortin**, *Florida Gulf Coast University*
- **Moderator: Elizabeth Barrie**, *University of Nevada, Las Vegas*

Translating Workforce Signals into Academic Pathways: A CDI-Informed Decision Framework

Location: Grand K



Entrepreneurial Initiatives, Internal Advocacy

- **Diane Ellison**, *National University*
- **Thapelo Whitfield**, *National University*
- **Moderator: Owen Zack**, *Lightcast*

3:30 PM–4:30 PM

PROMOTIONAL PARTNERS STOP & SHARE

Location: Arlington Ballroom III–VI

What's happening beyond your campus? Come find out. Credential innovation doesn't happen in isolation. Stop and Share brings together Convergence Promotional Partners and conference attendees for informal conversations about what's emerging across the credential innovation ecosystem.

Move from table to table, meet organizations working in and around higher education, hear what they're learning from the field, and share your own questions and experiences. Whether you're looking for a new resource, exploring a challenge, or simply curious about what others are seeing, this is your chance to make connections and exchange ideas.

- **Moderator: Jacqueline Romero**, *UPCEA*

Thank you to our 2026 Convergence Promotional Partners!

- 1EdTech Consortium
- AAC&U
- American Council on Education (ACE)
- Badge Summit
- Competency-Based Education Network (C-BEN)
- Corporation for a Skilled Workforce (CSW)
- Credential As You Go (CAYG)
- Credential Engine
- Digital Credentials Consortium (DCC)
- Digital Promise
- Education Design Lab (EDL)
- Higher Learning Commission (HLC)
- Learn & Work Ecosystem Library
- Jobs for the Future (JFF)
- National Governors Association (NGA)
- Non-degree Credentials Research Network (NCRN)
- Online Learning Consortium (OLC)
- Today's Students Coalition
- Trusted Learner Network (TLN)
- Upskill America
- U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation
- WorkCred
- Strada Education Network

5:00 PM–5:30 PM

Peer Learning Lounge

Location: Arlington Ballroom III–VI

What are you trying to solve? What have you learned the hard way? What is working, or not working, on your campus? The Peer Learning Lounge brings attendees together in small groups of approximately 10 around timely credential innovation topics drawn from UPCEA's Peer Learning Groups. These facilitated conversations are designed for candid exchange, practical problem-solving, and connection with colleagues facing similar opportunities and challenges. All attendees are invited to pick a topic and be part of the conversation

- **Moderator: Melissa Peraino**, UPCEA

- 1 Credit for Prior Learning
- 2 Data Quality: Noncredit Data Collection & Quality
- 3 Data Quality: Storytelling Using Data
- 4 Employer Engagement and Partnership Models
- 5 Learning Mobility Infrastructure
- 6 National Work and Learning Conversations
- 7 Reduced Credit Hour Degree and Alternative Pathways
- 8 Stackable Credentials and Pathways
- 9 Workforce Mobility and Advancement
- 10 Convergence New Crew

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 15

7:15 AM–11:15 AM

Registration Open

Location: Grand Registration

7:15 AM–7:45 AM

Breakfast

Location: Arlington Foyer

Grab breakfast and mingle with exhibitors before heading to the morning's sessions.

7:15 AM–11:15 AM

Exhibit Hall Open

Location: Arlington Foyer

7:45 AM–8:45 AM

CONCURRENT SESSIONS VI

Best of Friends: Building a Strong, Trusting Partnership between the Registrar's Office and Continuing Education

Location: Grand H



 Internal Advocacy,
 Learner Experience

- **Sarah MacDonald**, James Madison University
- **Kurt Johnson**, James Madison University
- **Moderator: Sarah MacDonald**, James Madison University

Building a Digital Credential Ecosystem in 12 Months: A Practical Roadmap from Fragmentation to Scale

Location: Arlington I



 Internal Advocacy,
 Entrepreneurial Initiatives

- **Kerry Eberhardt**, New Jersey Institute of Technology
- **Alexander Visakay**, New Jersey Institute of Technology
- **Oscar Reyes**, New Jersey Institute of Technology
- **Moderator: Michael Edmondson**, New Jersey Institute of Technology

From Faculty to Staff: Building and Scaling a Microcredential Bootcamp Model At UMBC

Location: Grand A



 Faculty Experience,
 Internal Advocacy

- **Collin Sullivan**, University of Maryland Baltimore County
- **Susan Biro**, University of Maryland Baltimore County
- **James DeVita**, University of Maryland Baltimore County
- **Moderator: Kristen Vanselow**, Florida Gulf Coast University

From Pilot to Practice: Implementing Digital Badges at a Community College

Location: Grand DE



 Internal Advocacy,
 Digital Technology

- **Jim Vernon**, Aims Community College
- **Tomás Mindlin**, Proof of Knowledge
- **Moderator: Maurice Ballance**, Wichita State University

From Sector Alignment to System Design: Building Workforce Engagement as an Emerging Institution

Location: Arlington II



 U2B Stakeholder Engagement,
 Internal Advocacy

- **Tom Nicholas**, Nevada State University
- **Tansy Rabijahed**, Nevada State University
- **Stephanie Molina**, Nevada State University
- **Moderator: Ryan Greives**, Accredible

Concurrent Session block continues ►

SCHEDULE

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TRACK

-  Credential Innovation Foundations
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-  Learner Mobility: Pathways, Transfer & CPL
-  Strategy, Systems & Scaling Transformation
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TAG

-  Employer Engagement
-  Faculty
-  Learner Access
-  Policy
-  Technology

LEVELS

-  New
-  Building
-  Advanced
-  Scaling

 Hallmarks of Excellence in Credential Innovation

◀ 7:45 AM–8:45 AM Concurrent Session VI continued

Key Considerations for Creating a Comprehensive Learner Record: Designing, Scaling, and Sustaining Success

Location: Grand FG



 Digital Technology,
 Learner Experience

- **Sarah Esler**, *Michigan State University*
- **Moderator: Beth Hein**, *University of Wisconsin-Stout*

No New Courses Required: Innovating Without Breaking the System

Location: Grand J



 Internal Advocacy,
 Entrepreneurial Initiatives

- **Joseph Mauriello**, *The University of Texas at Dallas*
- **Matthew Paske**, *The University of Texas at Dallas*
- **Wesley Ladd**, *Louisiana State University*
- **Jeffrey Angle**, *ISACA*
- **Moderator: Carolyn Callaghan**, *Western Carolina University*

Scaling What Works: Building Faculty Buy-In and Organizational Alignment for Non-Credit Growth

Location: Grand B



 Internal Advocacy,
 Faculty Experience

- **Whitney Stout**, *West Virginia University*
- **Barbara Kopp Miller**, *The University of Toledo*
- **Justin Louder**, *Blackboard*
- **Moderator: Julia Hemme**, *University of Minnesota*

8:45 AM–9:30 AM

Morning Brief | Beyond the Pilot: How Institutions Build Credential Ecosystems That Actually Scale

Location: Arlington Ballroom III-VI



Martinez



Heath



Miles



Townsend



Campbell

Microcredentials, digital badges, and skills frameworks are no longer the challenge—scaling them is. Moving beyond isolated pilots requires coordinated governance, policy, technology, and operational systems that embed credential innovation into an institution's core infrastructure. In this lively session, institutional leaders will share how they built and operationalized integrated credential ecosystems connecting academic programs, digital credentials, learner records, transfer pathways, and credit for prior learning. Through lessons in governance, registrar operations, technology, faculty collaboration, and workforce alignment, presenters will demonstrate how cross-campus partnerships—not additional staffing—can create sustainable systems that support learner mobility and institutional agility. Attendees will leave with practical strategies for transforming credential innovation from disconnected pilots into an enterprise-wide ecosystem.

- **Gabrielle Martinez**, *Western Governors University*
- **Tyson Heath**, *Western Governors University*
- **Devin Miles**, *Oregon State University Ecampus*
- **Jarrell Townsend**, *Oregon State University*
- **Moderator: Scott Campbell**, *University of Chicago*

What if we start from Yes?

Too many learners face unnecessary barriers when their prior learning is evaluated for transfer and credit.

It's time to change the default.

The Joint Statement on Credit Evaluation & Learning Mobility calls on higher education to move from a culture of skepticism to one that recognizes learning wherever it happens.

Read the Joint Statement and Get Involved.

<https://go.aacrao.org/startfromyes>



AACRAO

SCHEDULE

View full session details in the conference app or at upcea.edu/convergence.

TRACK

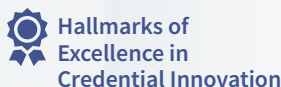
-  Credential Innovation Foundations
-  Digital Credentials & Skills Ecosystems
-  Learner Mobility: Pathways, Transfer & CPL
-  Strategy, Systems & Scaling Transformation
-  Workforce & Community Partnerships

TAG

-  Employer Engagement
-  Faculty
-  Learner Access
-  Policy
-  Technology

LEVELS

-  New
-  Building
-  Advanced
-  Scaling



9:30 AM–10:00 AM

Networking Break: Visit Exhibit Hall

Location: Arlington Foyer

Hey, did you miss breakfast? We've got a coffee (or tea) with your name on it. Join our exhibitors to give your morning a jumpstart!

10:00 AM–11:00 AM

CONCURRENT SESSIONS VII

Advancing Quality Assurance in Credentials: The HLC Endorsement Framework

Location: Arlington I



 Professionalism, U2B Stakeholder Engagement

- **Karen Solomon**, Higher Learning Commission
- **Ying Iverson**, Capella University
- **Ghi Crisafulli**, Sophia Learning
- **Moderator: Stephanie Heinrich**, Valparaíso University

Building an Integrated Microcredential Strategy: From Pilot to Practice

Location: Grand FG



 Internal Advocacy, Learner Experience

- **Sherri Place**, University of Pennsylvania
- **Brooke Bakan**, University of Pennsylvania
- **Moderator: Sherri Place**, University of Pennsylvania

Credit Where Credit Is Due: Building Scalable Learner Mobility Pathways

Location: Grand H



 Learner Experience, Internal Advocacy

- **Tyson Heath**, Western Governors University
- **Penny Ramirez**, Western Governors University
- **Moderator: Michael Brady**, Accredible

From Badges to Systems: How a Community of Practice Built a Scalable Microcredential Ecosystem

Location: Grand A



 Internal Advocacy, Professionalism

- **Amanda MacDonald**, Virginia Tech (Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University)
- **Marc Zaldivar**, Virginia Tech (Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University)
- **Moderator: Amanda Morris**, Virginia Commonwealth University

From Pilot to Scale: A Systematic Framework for Sustainable Microcredential Ecosystems

Location: Grand DE



 Professionalism, Internal Advocacy

- **Burcu Stone**, Texas Tech University
- **Bonnie Cordell**, Texas Tech University
- **Moderator: Saira Cooper**, Rice University

Learning Mobility in Action: Resources, Strategies, and Institutional Approaches for Scaling Interoperable Digital Credentials

Location: Arlington II



 Digital Technology, Learner Experience

- **Insiya Bream**, University of Maryland Global Campus
- **Emilie Rafal**, 1EdTech Consortium
- **Kristi Wold-McCormick**, University of Colorado Boulder
- **Moderator: Dana Brandt**, Strada Education Network

All times listed are in the Eastern Time Zone.

Rethinking Noncredit: Designing Experiences That Scale Across Systems

Location: Grand J



 Learner Experience,
 Digital Technology

- **Eve Canty**, University of Arkansas
- **Chris Browning**, Human Capital Education
- **Moderator: Tyler Rohrbaugh**, Human Capital Education

Transcript Transformers: Turning Civic Learning Into Workforce Gold

Location: Grand B



 Digital Technology,
 Learner Experience

- **Bridget Trogden**, American University
- **Ashley Burke**, Educational Testing Services
- **Moderator: Jill Pippin**, SUNY Oswego

11:15 AM–12:15 PM

Closing General Session | Learning Mobility and the Talent Marketplace: A Texas Story

Location: Arlington Ballroom III-VI



Flores Keller Ashton Rhodes

This session will share an emerging model in Texas for connecting noncredit and credit learning, employer demand data, microcredentials, and learner mobility infrastructure across a large, regionally diverse state. Leaders working across higher ed and workforce to explore what scalable, regionally responsive infrastructure could look like. Panelists will discuss the challenges and opportunities that a series of Texas projects offer to break down the silos between learning and working to create the mobility, skills recognition, and economic opportunity for learners in the state, and discuss how those lessons could be applied in other contexts.

- **Mike Flores**, Alamo Colleges District
- **Harrison Keller**, University of North Texas
- **Bryan Ashton**, Trellis
- **Richard Rhodes**, Texas A&M University-Central Texas

12:15 PM

Adjourn

SAVE THE DATE

to join us at
Convergence 2027,
September 27–29
in Orlando, Florida
at Disney's Yacht &
Beach Club!



EXHIBITOR SNAPSHOT

Learn more about our exhibitors!

Visit the conference app in Guidebook to learn more about each exhibitor! The app is free to download for Android and iOS. In Guidebook, search “2026 Convergence—Washington, DC.”

Accredible

Accredible

accreditable.com

- Digital Certificates and Open Badges
- Stackable and Pathway Credentials
- Credential Analytics and Fraud Prevention



Coursera

coursera.org/campus

- Professional Industry Certificates
- Hands-on Guided Projects
- Seamless LMS Integration



EducationDynamics

educationdynamics.com

- Enrollment Management Solutions
- Full Funnel Marketing, including AI Visibility, Brand and Creative
- Reputation Services, including Crisis Management, Media Relations and Strategic Communications



CampusCE

campusce.com

- Continuing Education & Workforce Enrollment Management
- Stackable Credentials & Workforce Pathways
- Enterprise SIS, LMS & CRM Integrations



CredLens

credlens.org

- Earnings & Education Outcomes Insights
- Credential-to-Outcomes Data Matching
- Secure, Interactive Outcomes Dashboard for Credential Issuers



Eduframe by Drieam

eduframe.com

- Student Information System for Continuing Education
- Catalog & online storefront
- Course registration system



Condensed Curriculum International (CCI)

ccipartner.com

- Workforce Programs and Solutions
- Ready to Work Job Placement & Externship Services
- Ecommerce Platform & Digital Catalog



Ed2go, a Cengage Company

ed2go.com

- Online Courses
- Enrollment and Student Services
- Workforce Funding Guidance



Enrole

entrinsik.com/platform/enrole

- Enrollment & Registration Management
- Contract Training
- Reporting & Business Analytics



HRCP

hrcp.com/explore

- Turnkey Digital Credential Programs
- Canvas-Integrated Micro-Credentials & Digital Badges
- Turnkey HR Certification Prep Programs



Learn & Work Ecosystem Library

learnworkecosystemlibrary.com

- Digital Infrastructure & Knowledge Management
- Communications & Public Engagement
- Knowledge Resources & Landscape Analysis



Noodle

noodle.com

- Strategy and implementation for stackable credentials
- Technology to scale executive education and B2B partnerships
- Artificial intelligence to support and enhance the student journey

Instructure.

Instructure

instructure.com

- Canvas Learning Management System
- Parchment Digital Credentialing



ISACA Academic Partnerships

isaca.org/partnerships/become-an-academic-partner

- Embed employer-demanded credential content into existing higher education programs and courses
- Build faculty capacity with content that addresses emerging employer needs
- Give students a competitive edge with a degree plus employer-demanded credential



Lightcast

lightcast.io

- Labor market intelligence for business, education institutions and governments worldwide
- Insight into skills, jobs, companies, professional profiles and workforce trends



Pearson

pearson.com

- Develop engaging learning experiences
- Expand access through digital learning
- Validate skills with assessments and credentials



MindEdge

mindedge.com

- High Demand Catalog for Professional and Continuing Education
- Course Development and Customization
- Continuing Education Marketing and Sales Support



PROOF OF KNOWLEDGE®

POK: Proof of Knowledge

pok.tech

- Digital Verifiable Credential Creation, Issuance, and Management
- Stackable Credentials and Learner Pathways
- Credential Analytics, Integrations, and Employability Insights



Jenzabar

jenzabar.com

- Cloud-native student information system (SIS)
- Continuing education and workforce development systems
- Registration and ecommerce platform for non-traditional programming



Modern Campus

moderncampus.com

- Content Management System
- SaaS Solution
- Student Success

EXHIBITOR SNAPSHOT



Scrum Alliance

scrumalliance.org

- **Professional Education & Certifications**
Industry-recognized Scrum and Agile certifications, including Certified ScrumMaster® (CSM®), Certified Scrum Product Owner® (CSPO®), Certified Scrum Developer® (CSD®), Certified Agile Leader® (CAL™), and advanced certification paths. Instructor-led training through a global network of Certified Scrum Trainers® (CSTs®).
- **Organizational Transformation & Enterprise Enablement**
Support for organizations adopting Agile practices at scale. Resources, learning pathways, and coaching to help leaders improve team effectiveness, agility, AI adoption, and business outcomes. Enterprise memberships and customized learning solutions.
- **Community, Events & Continuous Learning**
Global Scrum Gatherings®, regional events, webinars, user groups, and networking opportunities.



SmartBrief

smartbrief.com

- Enrollment Marketing
- Branding
- Content Marketing



Territorium

territorium.com

- Interoperable LERs, CLRs, and Digital Credentials
- Credential Ecosystem Strategy and Implementation
- Learner-Owned Wallets and AI-Powered Career Pathways



UPCEA

upcea.edu

- Exclusive Research & Policy Insights—Access cutting-edge data and policy information
- Networking & Community—Connect with 15,000+ professionals in online and professional education
- Professional Development—Courses, webinars, workshops & career-building opportunities



Ziplines Education

ziplines.com

- Professional Certificate Program Development
- Enrollment Marketing & Student Acquisition
- Learner Experience & Workforce Outcomes

Noodle

(*'noo-dl*) v. *intr.*

To think creatively, experiment, or improvise.

**Noodle delivers the people, process, and
technology for institutions to grow and
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