

Community Colleges and Non-Degree Credentials: Drivers for Change and Early Lessons Learned



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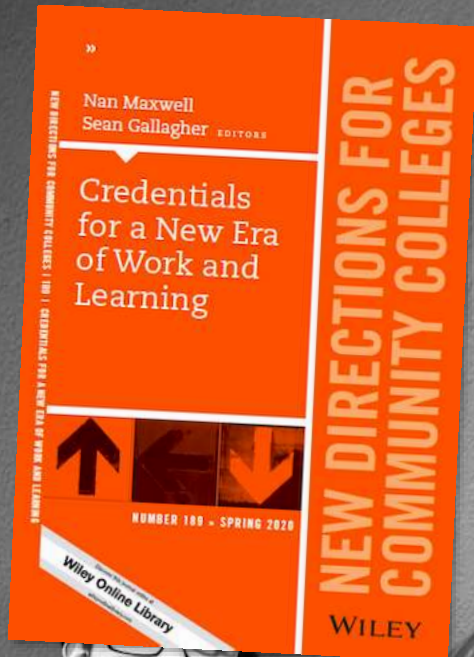
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Northeastern University
Center for the Future of Higher
Education and Talent Strategy

Opportunity for Community Colleges in the Non-Degree Credential Landscape



- Animated by growing interest familiar to NCRN participants
 - Practitioner-focused resource and call to action
- Trend analysis, case studies, best practices, frameworks

Today's Goal:

Highlight some of the key takeaways with an eye toward implications for future research; prompt dialogue



Researcher and Practitioner Perspectives



Drivers for Change in Higher Education

Nan Maxwell & Sean Gallagher

Using Smaller Credentials to Build Flexible Degree Completion and Career Pathways

Brenda Perea

Connecting Workplace Learning and Academic Credentials via Digital Badges

David Leaser, Kemi Jona, Sean Gallagher

Embedding Industry Certifications into Community College Programs

Russell N. McCaffery, Leslie Backus, Nan Maxwell

Quality Assurance for the New Credentialing Market

Steven C. Taylor & Louis Soares

Reflections on Education in a New Era of Work and Learning

Holly Zanville

A Dialogue about the Emerging Market for New Credentials

Sean Gallagher & Nan Maxwell

Building a Consistent Terminology in the Market for New Credentials

Nan Maxwell & Sean Gallagher

The New Era of Work and Learning



Lifelong learning – more credentials over career, skills longevity



Growth in *workforce-aligned* non-degree credentials



Rise of non-institutional providers



Employers diversifying beyond the degree with skills-based hiring, application of data and analytics

5

Imperatives for the New Era

1. Unbundle learning
2. Integrate academic and workplace learning, with links to credit
3. Focus learning for careers / lifelong learning
4. Embrace *competency-based* credentials
5. Recognize emergence of new QA models
 - 3rd parties, State/Fed, Employers

Community Colleges' Advantages in This New Landscape

- **Dual mission: traditional degrees and workforce development**
 - Opportunity for stackability
 - Embed newer credentials (e.g. badges) into existing coursework
- **Long history of awarding certificates**
 - 65% of for-credit certificate issuance
 - 70% increase in sub-bacc certificates 2001-2016
- **Established infrastructure vis. non-trad providers**
 - QA via accreditation
 - Faculty networks and expertise in instructional design
 - Recognized brands in the community





Building Flexible Degree and Career Pathways and Embedding Industry Certifications

Lessons Learned from Cases Including CO, TN, Broward (FL)

- **System-wide approaches can provide consistency, positive impact on student success**
- **Rethink pathways to associate degrees to allow credit for 2-year certificates and industry-specific certifications**
- **Alignment with certifications helps students “see” a framework for an industry and understand options**
- **Challenge of aligning with frequent industry changes – refreshing curriculum**
- **Importance of leadership in championing design of pathways to include stacked or latticed credentials – and comprehensive communications strategy**

In a Partnership with IBM, Northeastern Has Articulated Digital Badges for Graduate Degree Credit

Example

IBM Digital Badge		Advanced Standing	Northeastern CPS Credentials
	IBM Associate Project Manager	1 course or 4 Quarter Hours (PJM 5900)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Masters of Science in Project Management • Masters of Science in Leadership with a concentration in Project Management • Masters of Science in Program and Project Portfolio Management • Masters of Science in Corporate and Organizational Communication with a concentration in Project Management
	IBM Advisory Project Manager	1 course or 4 Quarter Hours (PJM 5900)	
	IBM Senior Project Manager	2 courses or 7 Quarter Hours (PJM 5900 & PJM 6000)	
	IBM Executive Project Manager	3 courses or 10 Quarter Hours (PJM 5900, PJM 6000, & 1 PJM Elective)	

- Faculty engagement and governance crucial
- Robust communication and marketing strategy essential
- Need for clearer specifications and badge data to support scalability

Quality Assurance for the New Credentialing Landscape

- **Need to expand current system or create new models**
 - **Pressure on existing triad of State Regulation, Accreditation, Federal**
- **Emergence of QAEs from EQUIP; who watches the watchers?**
- **Importance of validation in *both* learning and working contexts**
- **Greater focus on outcomes and transparency**
- **Community colleges need more active role in dialogue about how this unfolds**



Looking Ahead in The New Era of Work and Learning

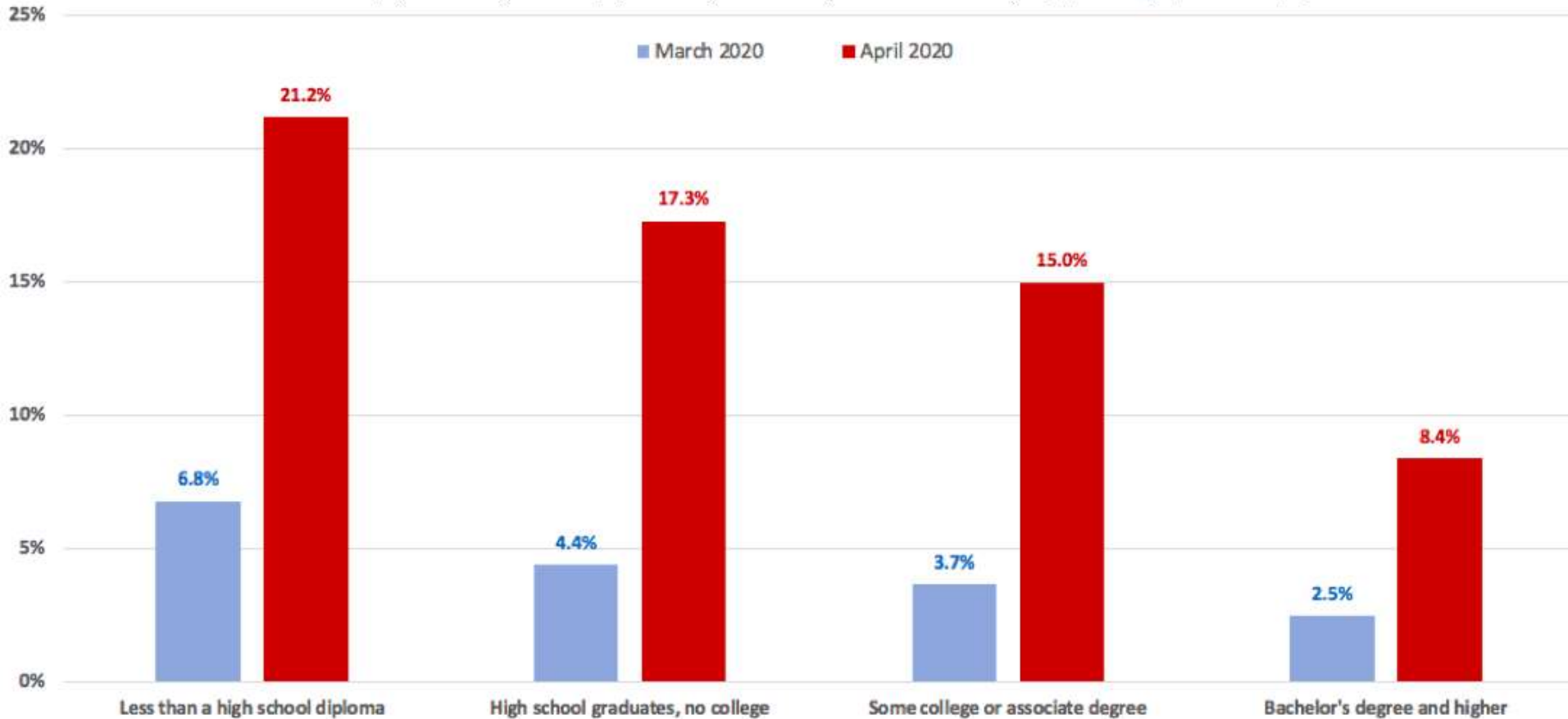
Future Credentialing “Trends to Watch”

- **Designing programs with skills/industry frameworks**
- **Certifications and skills embedded into curricula**
- **Academic credit - non-credit/for-credit blurring**
- **Verifying workplace-based learning**
- **Transparency through common standards and databases**
- **Digital verification systems and vendors**
- **Changing employer hiring practices**
- **Technological advances**
- **Growing focus on equity**

A Reminder of Value of Credentials in a Dynamic Job Market

April vs. March 2020: COVID-19 Impact Unemployment Rate by Educational Attainment Level

Source: BLS Table A-4. Employment status of the civilian population 25 years and over by educational attainment, <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.t04.htm>



Non-degree credentials and stacking!

Today's Environment – Prompts for Discussion

- Greater worker and student mobility/disruption
- Acceleration of technology trends (and tech job market)
- Lack of empirical research – outcomes, earnings, equity
- Still uncertain *language*
- Flexibility – unions, financial aid, institutional processes often inhibit
- Funding/resources e.g. product development, instructional design capacity (role of intermediaries?)
- Need for leadership and system support, faculty support

