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# 3 Certify student competencies and capabilities, expand pathways to accelerate degree completion through credit for prior learning, and foster the award of competency-based credit and degrees.

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Accrediting agencies, employers, policy makers, taxpayers, and students are all demanding increased attention to learning outcomes and the documentation of specific competencies students have mastered. Students come to college with prior knowledge and relevant experience, and our colleges and universities have made considerable progress in assessing those capabilities, including offering students an opportunity to demonstrate their learning through a portfolio assessment or a credit by exam option.

Currently, our approach to credit for prior learning has relied on implementation predominately by individual colleges and universities with limited statewide or regional coordination. Students are often unaware of these options at their own institutions, and there is wide variation across our colleges and universities in course equivalencies for national exams and for the transferability of credit for prior learning.

Collaboration to develop a shared statewide system of credit for prior learning and for competency based assessments would allow students to accelerate their degree completion and provide a mechanism to assure they will not duplicate learning they have already accomplished. Statewide collaboration will also allow an opportunity to create and explore pathways for students to demonstrate their mastery of competencies and receive credit for non-credit offerings including MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses).

## Strategies:

- Broaden students' opportunities to earn credit for prior learning by developing a statewide certification process to award transferable competency-based credit.
- Facilitate the transferability of our courses and programs by defining shared learner outcomes and competencies within disciplines, departments and programs. Focus initially on developmental and gateway courses.
- Increase students' applied learning opportunities aligned with industry-recognized standards such as apprenticeships, work-related or on-the-job training, internships or dual training models.
- Promote the accountability of our educational offerings by encouraging college and university participation in subject-specific accreditations and national measures that are benchmarked with peer institutions through partnerships with other colleges and universities or through third-party evaluations.

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