Making Non-Credit Programs A Route to Upward Mobility

David Baime
Senior Vice President, Government Relations
American Association of Community Colleges

Anthony Caison, VP of Workforce Continuing Education
Scott Ralls, Ph.D., President
Wake Technical Community College

Michelle Van Noy, Ph.D.
Director, Education and Employment Research Center
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

UPWARD MOBILITY IN U.S?

- General Definition: Doing Better Than Your Parents Did

- US is very close to the bottom of 50 most productive Western economies on this variable

- Wealth is far more important determinant than income or education

- Two parents, neighborhoods matter a great deal

- As income gaps widen, passing on advantages increases in importance

- Four-year colleges have not or cannot adequately address problem

- Responsibility falls on community colleges

AACC AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES

FEDERAL POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

- Wide variability, spotty outcomes information, and limited understanding of basic nature of programs has hindered support

- In general, job-training programs are held to far more exacting standards than academic programs

- Federal student aid (Title IV) is structured around for-credit offerings (though some non-credit can qualify)

- WIOA contracts can include non-credit offerings

- JOBS Act would fund non-credit programs that articulate into or are accepted for credit at the college; important step forward

AACC AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES

POLITICAL AND POLICY ISSUES

- Most policymakers insist that programs must be part of larger career pathway in order to merit support

- Perceptions of some programs as being "dead end" has hurt advocacy

- For-profit institutions want involvement

- Gradual recognition that workforce preparation can take other forms than traditional academic credentials

- Better information on non-credit programs is necessary

- Community colleges must take the lead on advoacy

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES

How does noncredit education relate to social mobility?

Noncredit programs reflect jobs and labor market conditions

At the sub-bac level, there are range of middle skill jobs (JFF/Burning Glass analysis):
-   Lifetime—career jobs
-   Springboard—lead to careers
-   Static—do not lead to careers
And, many low-wage jobs that do not lead to careers

Confronts us with difficult questions about social mobility …. Are we contributing to inequality by moving people into poor quality jobs? Or are we reducing inequality by moving people into good jobs and/or clear pathways to good jobs?

What are the social mobility needs of students in noncredit education?

- High numbers of CC enrollments are in noncredit; adults make up 75% of noncredit enrollments (Opportunity America, 2021)

- Noncredit students more likely to be older, be students of color, and not have a HS diploma (Xu, 2015).

- Career pathways and stackable credentials offer the promise of career advancement, but few students progress from noncredit to credit (Bailey & Belfeild, 2019).

https://opportunityamericaonline.org/community-college-workforce-education/
https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/publications/noncredit-education-in-community-college.html https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/publications/stackable-credentials-awards-for-future.html

What can colleges do with noncredit education to support mobility?

Promoting and documenting quality is essential – do programs provide job-relevant skills and skills needed for further education?

Measuring and tracking outcomes is also essential – do programs lead students to outcomes they need? If not, why?

Understand how noncredit programs translate into value – are there efforts the college can make to promote better outcomes?

Key Elements of Non-Degree Credential Quality

Quality Design ➔ Outcomes of Value

- Content relevance
- Instructional processes
- Assessment processes
- Stackability & portability
- Transparency
- Accessibility & affordability

- Competencies
- Employment
- Educational
- Social
- Employer
- Societal

Market processes… Translate a credential with quality design to outcomes of value. Including: transparency, awareness, validations, regulations, employer practices, educational recognition.

EERC Non-degree credential quality framework, Van Noy, McKay & Michael (2019).

What are states doing with noncredit education to promote social mobility?

State are funding short-term workforce programs – for example: Get There Florida, Indiana Next Level Jobs, New Jersey Pay It Forward Program, Louisiana MJ Foster, Virginia Fast Forward, and others.

States are collecting data noncredit activity – Iowa, Louisiana, and Virginia are working with EERC to analyze noncredit activity and develop a taxonomy for measurement. Other states to join the effort.

What are college doing with noncredit education to promote social mobility?

- Most colleges seek to develop links with degree programs but great variability in progress
- Few dedicated supports for noncredit students but big need
- Shifts in organization, e.g. merging with credit; separate and rebranded to emphasize shorter-term programs
- Strategies around quality can support connecting noncredit to credit programs, such as:
  - Documenting labor market need
  - Involvement of faculty in noncredit program development
  - Alignment with external standards, e.g use of industry certifications

EERC Issue Brief, Van Noy & Hughes, 2022

For More Information, Contact Us.

Michelle Van Noy

mjvannoy@rutgers.edu

848-445-4734

Download the Community College Noncredit Workforce Education issue brief:
https://smlr.rutgers.edu/faculty-research-engagement/education-employment-research-center-eerc/eerc-projects/quality-and

Download the Non-Degree Credential Quality Conceptual Framework:
smlr.rutgers.edu/NDCQuality

Complete our survey on LMI Use:
LMISurvey.com

Education and Employment Research Center
School of Labor and Management Relations
Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey

NC Community Colleges Workforce Continuing Education

- Combined Course List Approval
  - Description; Recommended Hours

- Tiered Funding Assignment
  - Certification/Licensure; Minimum 96 hours

- Short Term Workforce Development Grant/NC Workforce Credential
  - North Carolina resident
  - *"The NC Workforce Credentials Advisory Council is identifying priority non-degree credentials that are valued by employers and put those who earn them on a path to a sustainable wage career."*
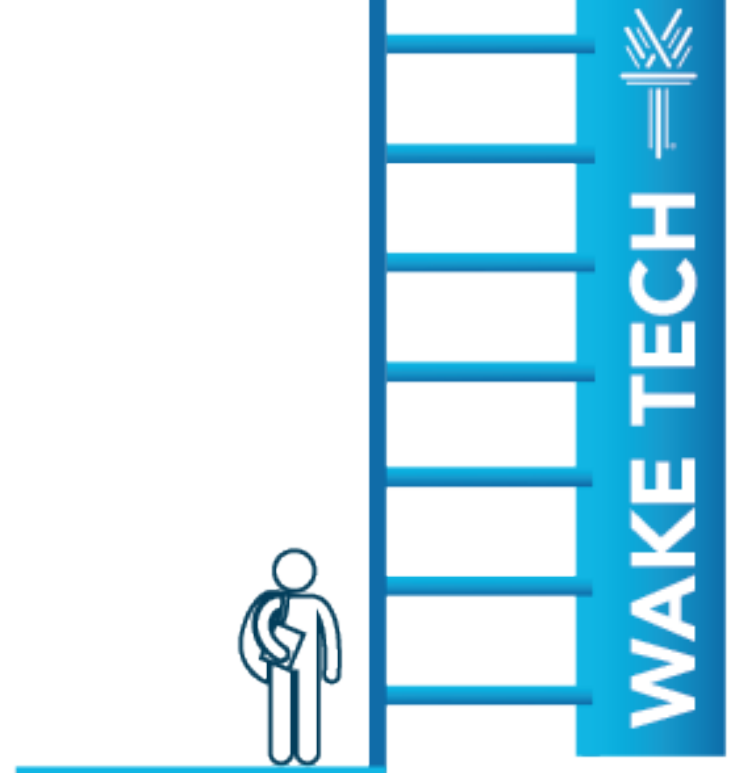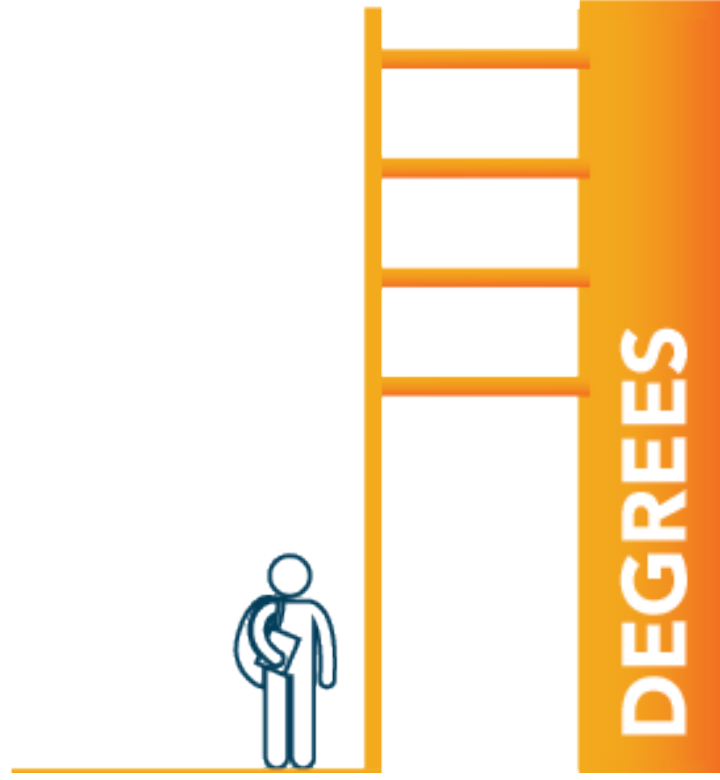
wakeworks PROPEL

Industrial Manufacturing

- ❯ Bioprocessing Technician +

Information Technology

- ❯ AWS Certified Solutions Architect Associate
- ❯ Bookkeeping Fundamentals using Quickbooks +
- ❯ Cisco Certified Network Associate +
- ❯ CompTIA Certified Cybersecurity Analyst CySA +
- ❯ Data Analytics for Business Professionals
- ❯ IT Support Technician +
- ❯ Microsoft Office 365/Office 2019 for Office Administration
- ❯ Network Technician +
- ❯ Red Hat Certified System Administrator
- ❯ Software Developer Using Python +
- ❯ Technology Basics for Digital Literacy
- ❯ Web Programmer Using HTML5, CSS, and JavaScript +
- ❯ Web Programmer Using Python and Django +

Healthcare

- ❯ Certified Nurse Aide
- ❯ Central Sterile Processing Technician
- ❯ EKG Technician
- ❯ Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) +
- ❯ Health care Billing and Coding +
- ❯ Medical Terminology +

Public Safety

- ❯ Basic Law Enforcement Training +

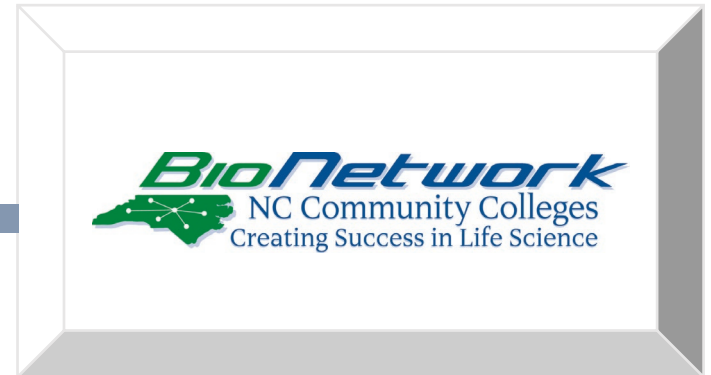## Skilled Construction and Maintenance Trades

- ❯ Apartment Maintenance Technician
- ❯ Carpentry
- ❯ Facilities Maintenance Technician
- ❯ Tower Technician

Biopharmaceutical Technology
AAS Degree

"A More Unified Community College: Strategies to Align Non-Credit and Credit Programs"
                              Education Strategy Group, 2020

- *"Now is the time to create a more unified community college that aligns industry-focused non-credit programs to credit programs that lead to degrees."*

  - Treat all students as students
  - Build clear pathways between non-credit and credit credentials.

  - **Align departments and governance**.
    - *"Consider organizing relevant non-credit and credit programs into the same department or establishing joint leadership."*

  - Make programs credit-worthy or credit based.
  - Remove barriers to transition.