



For Immediate Release

Credential Engine Announces New Faces and Leadership Transition

The non-profit to add NJ Council of County Colleges President Fichtner to the Board, onboard new staff, and seek its next Executive Director

October 4, 2019 (Washington, DC)—Credential Engine was founded in December, 2016, with a very simple vision:

"Everyone will have all the information they need about every education and training opportunity to help them make the best decisions about their own pathways."

At its core, that's credential transparency.

Credential Engine has led the way in efforts to improve the credential marketplace by building the necessary tools for transparency, searchability, comparability, and improved understanding. To that end, Credential Engine would like to highlight recent updates to the team.

Welcome

Aaron Fichtner, President of New Jersey Council of County Colleges, has joined the Board of Directors. Prior to becoming President of NJCCC, Fichtner joined the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development where he served as the Assistant Commissioner, the Deputy Commissioner and the Commissioner of the Department from 2016 - 2018. He oversaw the introduction of New Jersey's partnership with Credential Engine as the Commissioner, and worked to ensure its successful continuation through the change in state leadership. He also served as Chair of the National Association of State Liaisons for Workforce Development Partnerships, a workforce development affiliate of the National Governors Association. Before joining the Department, he was the Director of Research and Evaluation at the Rutgers University's Heldrich Center for Workforce Development.

Deborah Everhart, currently a Senior Strategic Advisor to Credential Engine, will transition to a full-time position of Chief Strategy Officer for Credential Engine on November 1, 2019. Deb's career has included work as a strategic advisor for the American Council on Education, Vice President for Design and Innovation at Cengage, and Associate Vice President at Blackboard. She has led and contributed to open standards initiatives with IMS Global, the T3 Innovation Network, and the Badge Alliance. Her publications include "Quality Dimensions for Connected Credentials," "Communicating the Value of Competencies," and numerous articles and book chapters on innovative credentialing, competency-based learning, and emerging technologies. Deb will bring her experience developing innovative technology products and services to Credential Engine as we continue to focus on how we serve the marketplace and partners of all types in advancing credential transparency.

Jeanne Kitchens, Associate Director for the Southern Illinois University Center for Workforce Development, and current project manager of Credential Engine's technologies, will join Credential Engine as the Director of Technology Services on January 1, 2020. Jeanne has led the technical design and development efforts for the Credential Engine technologies working with multiple partners and teams and was among the original team responsible for transforming the Credential Transparency Initiative pilot project into the current organization. In addition she has led technical and program development teams for numerous workforce development

programs for the State of Illinois and for national programs including the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation's Talent Pipeline Management.

Transitions

Scott Cheney, Executive Director for Credential Engine, announced that he will begin to transition out of this role in the coming months. Cheney, who joined as the first Executive Director in April of 2017, helped launch the organization's tools and services—the Credential Registry, Credential Transparency Description Language (CTDL), and Open Applications Marketplace, and raise understanding of the value of open, accessible, comparable data about all education and occupational credentials in the marketplace. During his tenure, the Registry has grown in size and depth, 16 states and regions joined as partners to bring better information to their residents and employers, and numerous organizations, agencies, and institutions across the country have taken the lead in advancing credential transparency.

"In just short of three years the entire landscape has changed, with more leaders in every sector recognizing that fully open data about all credentials is both possible and essential to improving the efficiency and effectiveness of our education and training systems, services, and policies in the country," stated Cheney. "Credential Engine is very well positioned to accomplish its mission, and is fortunate to have such high caliber staff joining this work at this point. It's been my honor to be a part of its early years of work."

"It's amazing to reflect back and remember that in 2016, credential transparency was still just an idea. In such a short time, Credential Engine has had so many notable successes standing up revolutionary technologies and meaningful partnerships across the country. While they are just the first of many successes to come, these victories are directly related to the leadership and vision Scott brought to the team," said Credential Engine Board Chair and Washington Workforce Board Executive Director Eleni Papadakis. "Thanks to the course he has set us on, we are more confident than ever that true and complete credential data transparency is within our grasp."

"Credential Engine's efforts to bring transparency to the meaning of every credential in terms of the learning each represents is more critical today than five years ago when Lumina helped create this nonprofit," said Jamie Merisotis, the foundation's president and CEO. "With estimates of the number of credentials available in the U.S. exceeding 730,000 across nearly 20 types, the marketplace has grown more complex. Credential Engine offers the best option for bringing clarity as nearly half of credentialing programs are offered outside of colleges and universities."

The executive search firm Marcum/Raffa has been retained to begin a national search for a successor. Cheney will remain with Credential Engine throughout the search and the transition.

Credential Engine and its team are grateful for all of Cheney's contributions, and he will be missed.

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[Credential Engine](#) is a non-profit whose mission is to create credential transparency, reveal the credential marketplace, increase credential literacy, and empower everyone to make more informed decisions about credentials and their value. Credential Engine receives support from Lumina Foundation, JPMorgan Chase & Co., Walmart, Northrop Grumman Foundation, ECMC Foundation, and Microsoft.

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