For Immediate Release

Major Postsecondary Education Organizations Commit to Credential Transparency

ACE, AACRAO, EDUCAUSE and Credential Engine lead the way on postsecondary data innovation

November 4, 2019 (Washington, DC) – Today 15 national postsecondary education organizations signed a joint statement of their support for credential data transparency, marking a critical push on behalf of the higher education industry to dismantle long-held data silos and unlock the power of open data to better serve students. Through the leadership of the American Council on Education (ACE), the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO), and EDUCAUSE, these organizations are encouraging their members to describe their credential offerings with a common language and house the data in an open, cloud-based Registry in order to empower students, workers, employers, and policymakers to make more informed decisions about credentials and their value.

Recent years have seen explosive growth in the number and types of credentials in the marketplace; new research from Credential Engine reveals that over 730,000 unique credentials are now being offered in the U.S. alone. College and University leaders need to be able to break through this noise and demonstrate to students and employers the value of their institutional offerings, as well as provide a responsive mechanism to help align program curricula to outcomes and track credential changes over time. By committing to the concept of credential transparency, these signatories will contribute to the first and only comprehensive Credential Registry, utilize a common language to describe credential information, and leverage open data technology to better collect, connect, and compare credential data across institutions, businesses, and organizations.

"As we look to bolster public confidence in our higher education system and improve student outcomes, colleges and universities should embrace credential transparency principles," said ACE President Ted Mitchell. "These principles will be integral in ensuring that quality learning is connected and counted."

With higher education leading the way, the development of a robust digital ecosystem where credentials of all types and the knowledge, skills, abilities, and outcomes they represent can be easily translated across systems and compared across institutions, state, and even foreign borders provides a unique opportunity to tackle some of the industry's most pressing issues around documentation, recognition, transferability, and portability of learning across the learn and work system. From presidents, boards, IT leadership, and registrars to academic leadership, faculty, and institutional researchers, a wide variety of postsecondary leaders and staffers can contribute to these efforts to build a transparent data ecosystem.

"Credential Engine has the potential to create the critically needed bridges between those who seek post-secondary training and education to improve their lives and those who provide that training and education, and those who seek trained, educated people for the workforce," said Mike Reilly, Executive Director of AACRAO. "The Credential Registry represents the most promising effort to assemble information about the diverse array of credentials available in the educational and technical marketplace."

Thanks to newly developed technologies, this kind of transparency and interoperability of educational data is available for the first time. Postsecondary institutions large and small can access this technology at no cost and begin their work leading higher education into the 21st century.

"EDUCAUSE and its member community are excited to join ACE, AACRAO and other higher education associations in supporting the credential data transparency movement," said John O'Brien, President and CEO of EDUCAUSE. "Higher education is in the midst of a digital transformation that includes interoperable digital ecosystems like the Credential Registry, which we believe empowers students and supports their success."

"Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the credential marketplace requires both leadership and expansive collaboration," said Scott Cheney, Executive Director of Credential Engine. "We are honored that these three organizations and 12 national organizations recognize the value of transparency, openness, and better information for students, workers, employers, and educators, and have stepped up to lead the way."

The following signatories will kickoff transparency efforts this year, but will scale in the future as specific initiatives take shape, technologies get connected to the Credential Registry, and opportunities to further credential transparency are identified. The national organizations signing this joint statement are taking an important step in a virtuous cycle benefiting institutional staff and faculty, employers, and most importantly, students.

Signatories:

- [Achieving the Dream](#)
- [ACT](#)
- [American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers](#)
- [American Association of Community Colleges](#)
- [American Council on Education](#)
- [Association of Community College Trustees](#)
- [Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges](#)
- [Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities](#)
- [Association of Public and Land-grant Universities](#)
- [Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area](#)
- [EDUCAUSE](#)
- [NASPA, Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education](#)
- [National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators](#)
- [National Association for College Admission Counseling](#)
- [University Professional and Continuing Education Association](#)

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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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ACE is a membership organization that mobilizes the higher education community to shape effective public policy and foster innovative, high-quality practice. As the major coordinating body for the nation's colleges and universities, ACE's strength lies in its diverse membership of more than 1,700 colleges and universities, related associations, and other organizations in America and abroad. ACE is the only major higher education association to represent all types of U.S. accredited, degree-granting institutions: two-year and four-year, public and private.

For more information, please visit www.acenet.edu or follow ACE on Twitter [@ACEducation](#).

AACRAO is a non-profit, voluntary, professional association of more than 11,000 higher education professionals representing approximately 2,600 institutions in more than 40 countries. Its commitment to the professional development of its members includes best practice guidance on admissions strategies to meet institutional diversity objectives, delivery of academic programs in innovative ways to meet the needs of a changing student body, and exemplary approaches to student retention and completion.

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EDUCAUSE is a nonprofit association that helps higher education elevate the impact of IT. We are a community of IT leaders and professionals working together to tackle challenges and leverage opportunities that are constantly evolving within higher education. We welcome diversity, in viewpoints and experience, and believe in the transformative power of uncommon thinking for the common good.

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