



Accreditor to Chair Board of Credential Transparency Nonprofit

HLC President Barbara Gellman-Danley brings a powerful vision, experience to innovative nonprofit as ACE President Ted Mitchell and former New Jersey Workforce Commissioner Aaron Fichtner take on new leadership roles

March 29, 2022 (Washington, D.C.) — Credential Engine, a nonprofit organization leading the nation's work on credential transparency that empowers people to find the pathways that are best for them, has appointed Barbara Gellman-Danley, the president of one of the nation's leading accreditors, to chair its board of directors. American Council on Education President Ted Mitchell, a former U.S. Under Secretary of Education, as well as former New Jersey Labor and Workforce Commissioner Aaron Fichtner, have also assumed new leadership roles.

Credential Engine's pioneering "credential count," published annually, provides the nation's most accurate estimate of credentials across 16 categories—including traditional degrees, certificates, certifications, licenses and apprenticeships as well as non-traditional offerings such as badges. The organization's work is designed to inform policy making and spur transparency for education consumers who often have little insight into the value offered by a growing maze of academic degrees, certifications, and badges.

"This is one of the only organizations that fosters collaboration—and action—across leaders from not just traditional higher education, but also powerful accrediting bodies, workforce, and companies working to create new pathways to economic mobility," said outgoing founding Board Chair Eleni Papadakis, who is also Executive Director of the Washington Training and Education Coordinating Board. "Over the last six years, the organization has not only experienced tremendous growth, but is also playing a growing role in transforming the nation's education, training and skills ecosystem which is being accelerated and solidified by the new leadership."

Barbara Gellman-Danley is the new Board Chair. Gellman-Danley has been the President of the Higher Learning Commission since 2014. Previously, Gellman-Danley was the president of the University of Rio Grande/Rio Grande Community College, vice chancellor at the Ohio Board of Regents, president at Antioch University McGregor, vice president at Monroe Community College, and vice chancellor at the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education. Gellman-Danley has served on several boards and commissions, including the Association of Governing Boards (AGB) Council of Presidents, the American Council on Education (ACE) Commission on Education and Attainment, the

Council on Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL), and the ETS National Community College Council. She currently serves on the NC-SARA board.

Aaron Fichtner is the new Board Vice-Chair. Fichtner is the President of the New Jersey Council of County Colleges, working to build a strong collaborative network of the state's 18 community colleges. Prior to becoming President of the Council in 2018, he had served as the Commissioner of New Jersey's Department of Labor and Workforce Development, where he had previously served as the Department's Deputy Commissioner and the Assistant Commissioner for Research and Information. 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.

Ted Mitchell is the new Board Treasurer. Mitchell is the President of the American Council on Education (ACE), the major coordinating body for the nation's colleges and universities. ACE is the only major higher education association that represents all types of U.S.-accredited, degree-granting institutions, two- and four-year, public and private, with a membership of more than 1,700 colleges and universities, related associations, and other organizations in America and abroad. ACE's work encompasses policy advocacy; program development; and research focusing on equity, access, and student achievement. Mitchell's leadership of ACE and of the nation's higher education sector is informed by a lifetime of work in higher education as a professor, dean, college president, trustee, and most recently as U.S. Under Secretary of Education in the Obama administration. Mitchell also has deep experience in K-12 education, having served as CEO of the NewSchools Venture Fund—a venture philanthropy investing in K-12 innovation to support low-income students, schools, and communities—and as the president of the California State Board of Education.

“We are all deeply grateful for Eleni's leadership through these first years of Credential Engine's journey and mission,” said Gellman-Danley. “The organization is so widely respected as a result of her vision and passion. I am honored to follow her in this important role with the other very experienced officers.”

For more information, please contact info@credentialengine.org.

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About Credential Engine:

Credential Engine is a non-profit whose mission is to map the credential landscape with clear and consistent information, fueling the creation of resources that empower people to find the pathways that are best for them. Our work is already underway in 28 states and regions, and across 2 regional consortia of states. Learn more at www.credentialengine.org.



To learn more, please visit www.credentialengine.org or contact info@credentialengine.org