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Building the Noncredit Community College Data Infrastructure: The Intersection of Policy and Data

Michelle Van Noy, Education and Employment Research Center, Rutgers University
Paula Nissen, Iowa
Amy Cable, Louisiana

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Rising Interest in Noncredit and NDCs

- Individual preference

  – Over 2/3 of adults considering education prefer nondegree, up from 1/2 pre-pandemic (Strada, 2020).

  – Among "great resigners", 72% are enrolling in programs that are 6 months or shorter (Cengage, 2022).

- State funding investments

  – Examples: Get There FL, IN Next Level Jobs, NJ Pay It Forward, LA MJ Foster, VA Fast Forward, and others.

Proliferation of NDCs

- Estimated over 500,000 non-degree credentials offerings according to Credential Engine 2022 estimates

- Many types of NDCs
  - For-credit certificates
  - Noncredit certificates
  - Certifications
  - License
  - Apprenticeship
  - Badges/microcredentials

Types of Noncredit Education

- Four broad types of noncredit education (D'Amico et al., 2014)
  - Occupational Training
  - Sponsored Occupational (Contract) Training
  - Personal Interest
  - Pre-College Remediation
- NDCs are often part of occupational training and contract training. Certificates, badges, and microcredentials can be awarded; certifications and licenses can be earned after.

Link Between Noncredit Occupational Education & Outcomes

Education Levels of Occupations

Sub-Baccalaureate occupations

Bachelor's degree occupations

Scope of Skills

A **full set of skills** needed to work in an occupation

A **targeted set of skills** to enhance entry or advancement within an occupation or set of occupations.

Labor Market Outcomes

Direct Link to well-paying jobs

Low-paying jobs with pathways to well-paying jobs

Low-paying jobs with limited or no pathways to well-paying jobs

The occupational goals of either entering or advancing in an occupation.

Building the Data Infrastructure

Rutgers State Noncredit Data Project

Better understand noncredit – what is it??
Identify and document noncredit program characteristics in each state; generate state reports

Develop a taxonomy of noncredit to guide data collection efforts
Compare noncredit program characteristics across states and convene working group to build the taxonomy; generate cross state reports

Create a network of states dedicated to building the noncredit data infrastructure
Share lessons via a learning community of states and additional publications and presentations; over 30 states currently engaged

Project Phases

- With support from the National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (NCSES), Rutgers Education and Employment Research Center is partnering with states to examine their state-level noncredit data.

- Phase 1: Iowa, Louisiana, Virginia
  - Noncredit data inventory
  - Capturing course/program level data
  - Develop noncredit data taxonomy across states

- Phase 2: Expand to other states through three roles
  - Established state research partners similar to IA, LA, VA
  - Emerging state research partners
  - Learning community members

- Phase 3: National scan of state noncredit data and policy

- Future phases: Student-level analyses, student experiences, quality

Project Team

Noncredit Researchers:
- Michelle Van Noy, PI, Rutgers University
- Mark D'Amico, co-PI, University of North Carolina at Charlotte
- Peter Bahr, University of Michigan
- Di Xu, University of California – Irvine
- Anjali Srivastava – Rutgers University

Phase 1, State Partners:
- Iowa team – Paula Nissen, Vladimir Bassis
- Virginia team – Catherine Finnegan, Marina Bagreev
- Louisiana team – Amy Cable

Phase 2, State Partners:
- New Jersey, South Carolina, Oregon & 2 others TBD

Data Inventory and Definitions

Courses/Programs
- Field of Study (name, CIP, SOC, Career Cluster)
- Type (occupational, sponsored, pre-college, personal interest)

Outcomes
- Non-degree Credentials (industry certification, occupational license, college-issued certificate, micro-credential, apprenticeship)
- Noncredit-to-credit articulation
- Student Outcomes (continue to credit, completion, employment, salary/wages)

Instructional Characteristics
- Length (number of classes for program, contact hours)
- Admission Requirements (prerequisites, tests, age)
- Delivery (F2F, location, online, blended, competency-based)
- Work-based learning requirement
- Faculty (FT credit/noncredit, FT noncredit, PT/adjunct, external/contract)

Finance
- Tuition
- Government Funding (state reimbursement, WIOA eligible, econ development incentive, other federal and state grants)

Enrollment
- Headcount
- Demographics (race/ethnicity, age, sex/gender)
- Prior Educational Attainment

Student Services
- Academic Advising
- Career Advising
- Nonacademic Support

Identifiers
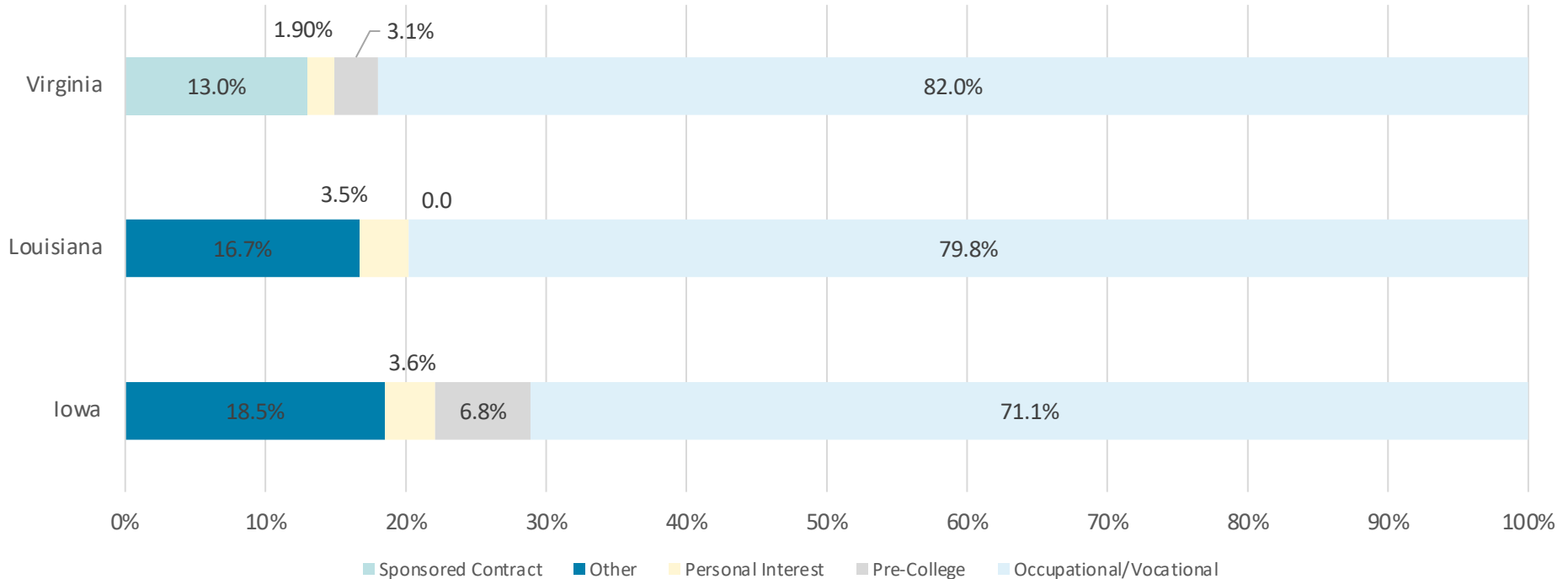- ID types (SS#, institutional ID, consistent ID, student names, birth dates)

A standard definition is needed to make proper cross-state comparisons

Table 1. State's Definitions and Methods for Identifying Unique Offerings

State	Number Unique Offerings	Definition of Unique Offering	Offering is Necessarily Unique to a College	Note on Colleges Offering Data
Iowa	924	Course or program uses a unique CIP code	no	Across Iowa's 15 community colleges
Louisiana	397	Unique combination of course and program name	yes	From 8 of 12 community colleges in the Louisiana Community and Technical College System
Virginia	6,045	A specific course is offered at a specific time by a college	yes	Across colleges within the Virginia Community College System

The most common noncredit offerings were workforce-oriented

Figure 1. Percent of Noncredit Offerings by Type

Region	Sponsored Contract	Other	Personal Interest	Pre-College	Occupational/Vocational
Virginia	13.0%		1.90%	3.1%	82.0%
Louisiana		16.7%	3.5%	0.0	79.8%
Iowa		18.5%	3.6%	6.8%	71.1%

Legend: ■ Sponsored Contract ■ Other ■ Personal Interest ■ Pre-College ■ Occupational/Vocational

Gender distribution varies by state

Figure 3. Percent Enrollment in Occupational/Vocational Noncredit by Sex

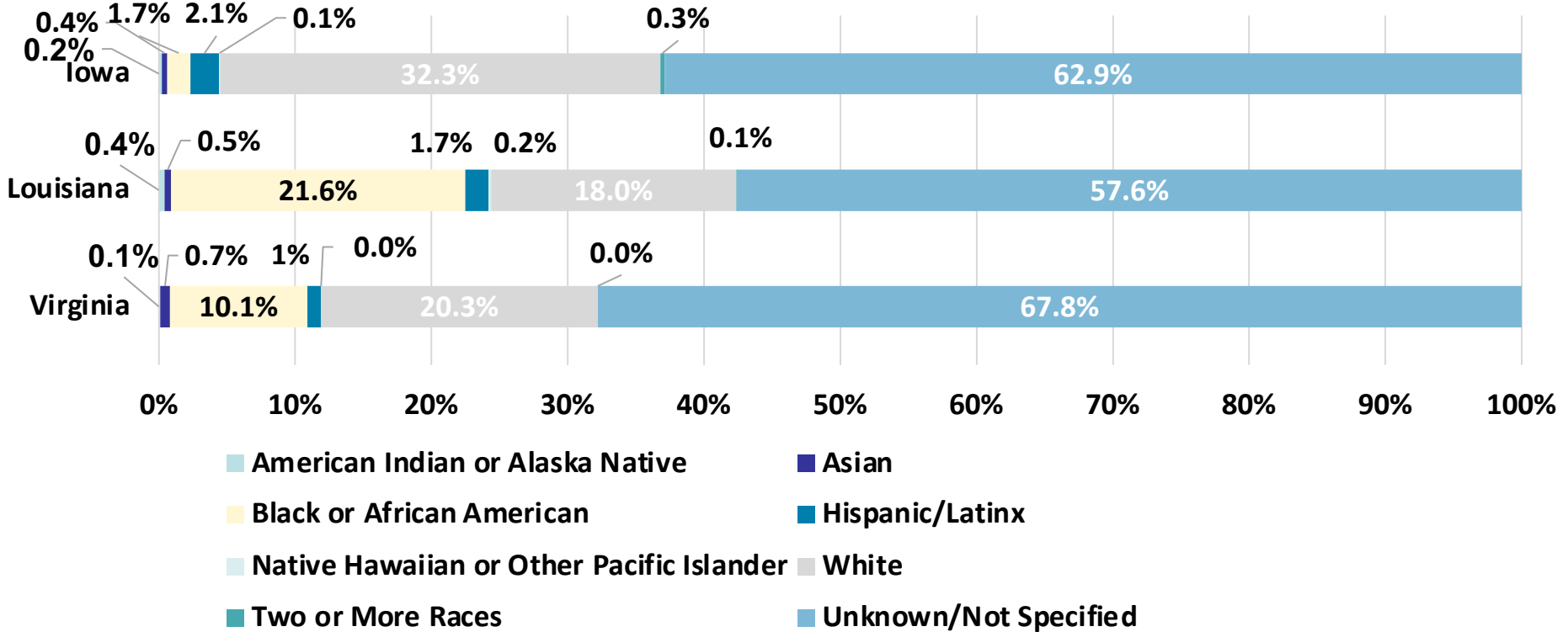| State	Female	Male	Unknown or Other
Iowa	39.3%	37.9%	22.8%
Louisiana	30.0%	68.0%	2.0%
Virginia	53.6%	41.1%	5.4%
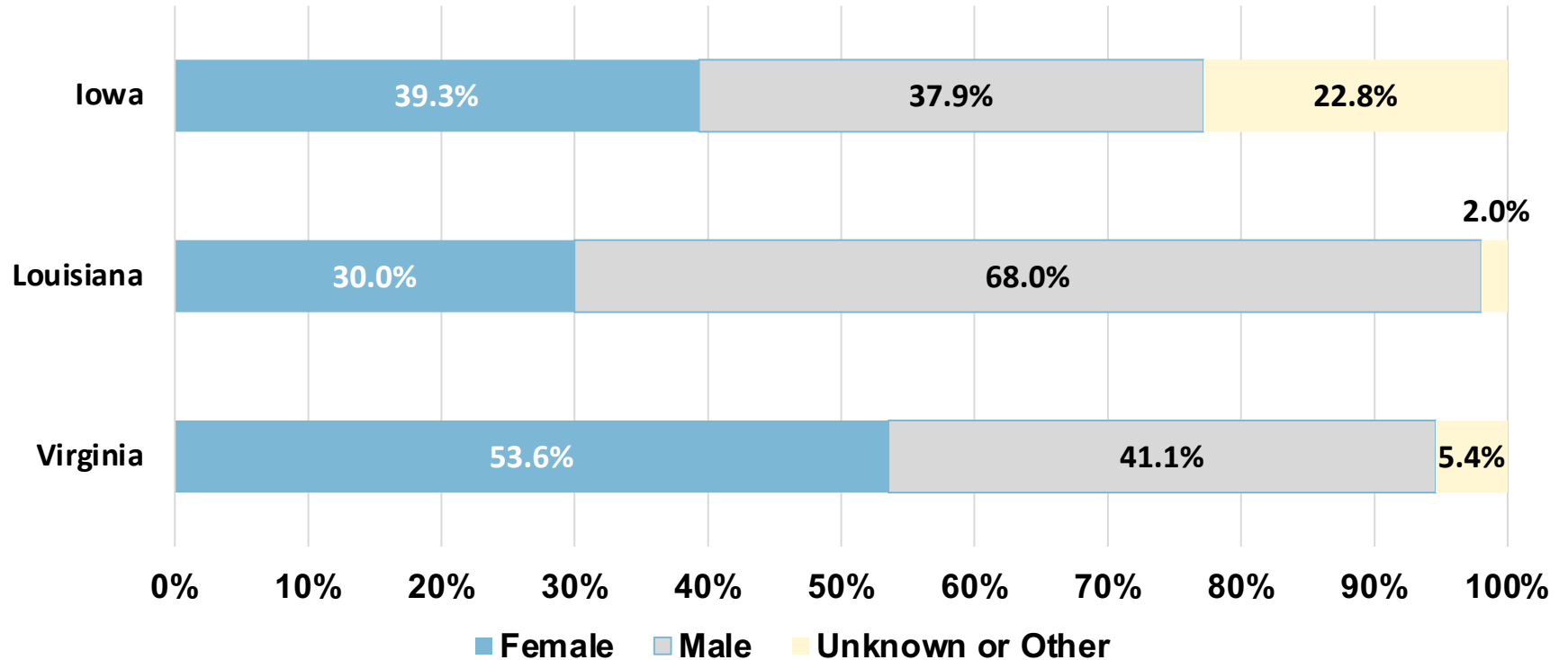
Data on race and ethnicity are often missing in noncredit studies

Figure 4. Percent Enrollment in Occupational/Vocational Noncredit by Race and Ethnicity

Iowa
0.2% 0.4% 1.7% 2.1% 0.1% 32.3% 0.3% 62.9%

Louisiana
0.4% 0.5% 21.6% 1.7% 0.2% 18.0% 0.1% 57.6%

Virginia
0.1% 0.7% 10.1% 1% 0.0% 20.3% 0.0% 67.8%

Legend:
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic/Latinx
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White
- Two or More Races
- Unknown/Not Specified

The length of programs vary, but average length is short

Noncredit Type	N	Contact Hours	
		Median	Mean
Occupational Training			
Iowa	657	26	51
Louisiana**	316	40	114
Virginia			
FastForward	2,006	100	112
Non-FastForward	2,952	15	35
Pre-College*			
Iowa	63	97	114
Virginia	187	50	87
Personal Interest			
Iowa	33	11	16
Louisiana	14	30	29
Virginia	117	6	9

*The Pre-College category is Not Applicable for Louisiana
**Data for Louisiana is 8 out of 12 colleges.

Noncredit offerings occurred in a wide variety of modalities

Noncredit Type	N	Delivery		
		% F2F	% Hybrid	% Online
Occupational Training				
Iowa	657	75%	7%	46%
Louisiana**	316	97%	6%	33%
Virginia				
FastForward	2,006	92%	5%	3%
Non-FastForward	2,952	61%	4%	35%
Pre-College*				
Iowa	63	89%	13%	30%
Virginia	187	96%	0%	4%
Personal Interest				
Iowa	33	73%	0%	61%
Louisiana	14	100%	0%	29%
Virginia	117	65%	1%	34%

*The Pre-College category is Not Applicable for Louisiana
**Data for Louisiana is 8 out of 12 colleges.

Each state varied in the type of credentials they awarded

Noncredit Type	N	Associated Credential			
		N for College Cert.	College Awarded Certificate	N for Industry Cert.	Industry Awarded Cert.
Occupational Training					
Iowa	657	280	80%	280	54%
Louisiana**	316	364	75%	233	93%
Virginia					
FastForward	2,006	2006	NA	2006	100%
Non-FastForward	2,952	2952	NA	2952	0%
Pre-College*					
Iowa	63	3	33%	3	0%
Virginia	187	187	NA	187	0%
Personal Interest					
Iowa	33	4	100%	4	75%
Louisiana	14	364	56%	233	89%
Virginia	117	117	NA	117	0%

*The Pre-College category is Not Applicable for Louisiana
**Data for Louisiana is 8 out of 12 colleges.

Attainment measures are consistently tracked but employment measures are harder to track

Table 5. Completion and Labor Market Data Availability by Noncredit Type

Noncredit Type	N	Completion Data	Labor Market Data			
		% with Completion Data	% with Pre-Enrollment Employment Data	% with Post-Enrollment Employment Data	% with Pre-Enrollment Salary/ Wage Data	% with Post-Enrollment Salary/ Wage Data
Occupational Training						
Iowa	657	100.0%	42.6%	42.6%	42.6%	42.6%
Louisiana	316	99.0%	9.8%	9.8%	4.8%	1.9%
Virginia						
FastForward	2,006	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Non-FastForward	2,952	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Pre-College*						
Iowa	63	100.0%	4.8%	4.8%	4.8%	4.8%
Virginia	187	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Personal Interest						
Iowa	33	100.0%	12.1%	12.1%	12.1%	12.1%
Louisiana	14	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

* The Pre-College category is Not Applicable for Louisiana

Partnerships drive data collection and accuracy

Table 6. Data Partners and Types Data Matched to Noncredit

Iowa Department of Education	Louisiana	Virginia
• Iowa Department of Corrections (incarceration-related data for students in incarceration and comparison groups) • Iowa Department of Education (Iowa high school students/graduates) • Iowa Department of Inspection and Appeals (Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA) licensing) • Iowa Department of Public Health (health occupational and related licenses—other than CAN) • Iowa Department of Transportation (commercial drivers licenses) • Iowa Workforce Development (employment and wages) • National Student Clearinghouse (postsecondary enrollment)	• Louisiana Workforce Commission (employment and wages) • Louisiana Board of Regents (enrollment and completers) • Department of Children and Family Services- Snap Employment and Training (enrollment and completers) • National Student Clearinghouse (post-secondary enrollment	• Virginia Employment Commission (employment and wages) • National Student Clearinghouse (postsecondary enrollment) • Virginia Department of Health Professions (Nursing and other health occupational and related licenses—Including CNA) • Virginia Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation (skilled trades, cosmetology, athletics and other regulated occupational licenses https://www.dpor.virginia.gov/node/6) • Virginia Department of Social Services (as a SNAP 50/50 provider and for special research and collaborative projects)

Initial Lessons Learned

- Courses vs. programs vs. offerings

- Variation among states AND program types in terms of what is collected

- Using data to "make the case"

- The data infrastructure builds over time

- Programming and funding tied to economic development and state initiatives

- Credentials of quality key to funding and structure

**To download reports from our State Noncredit Data Project…**

Using the Data Infrastructure to Measure Quality

Many Definitions of NDC/Credential Quality

- **National Skills Coalition...** Documented Job opportunities, Competencies; Employment outcomes, stackabilty (optional)

- **Education Strategy Group…** In-demand occupation, Employer use in hiring, education articulation

- **New America…** strong labor market outcomes, advances equity in occupations, educational articulation, affordable, strong completion

- **Gates Postsecondary Value Commission…** Employment outcomes

- **Lumina Quality Credentials Task Force...** Multiple measures of credential design and outcomes
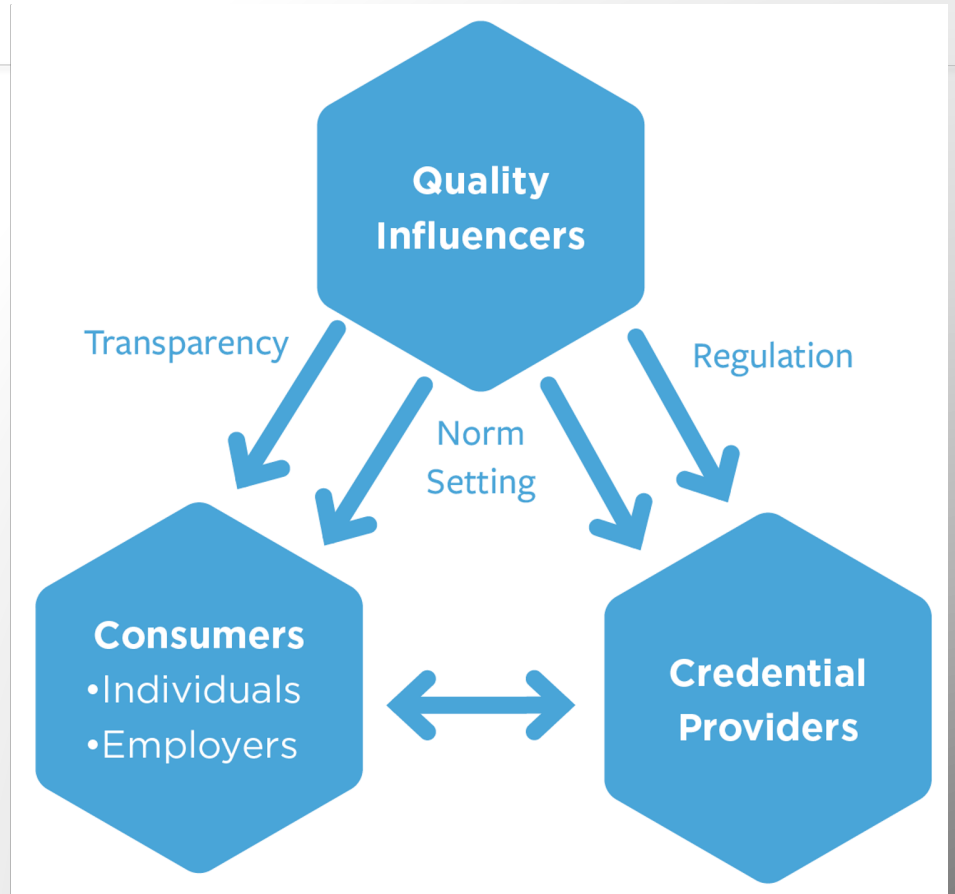
- And others

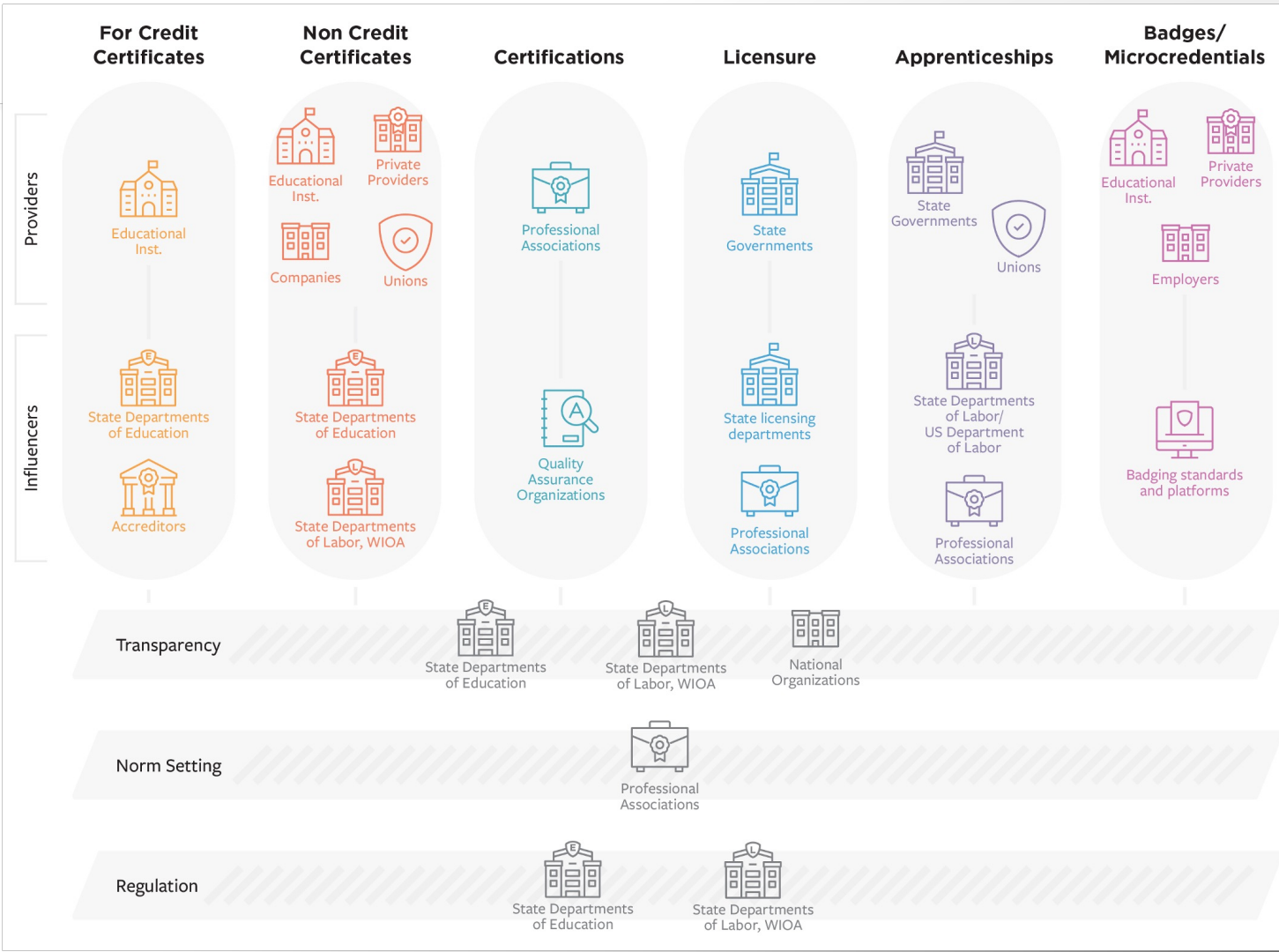# Commonalities in NDC Quality Definitions
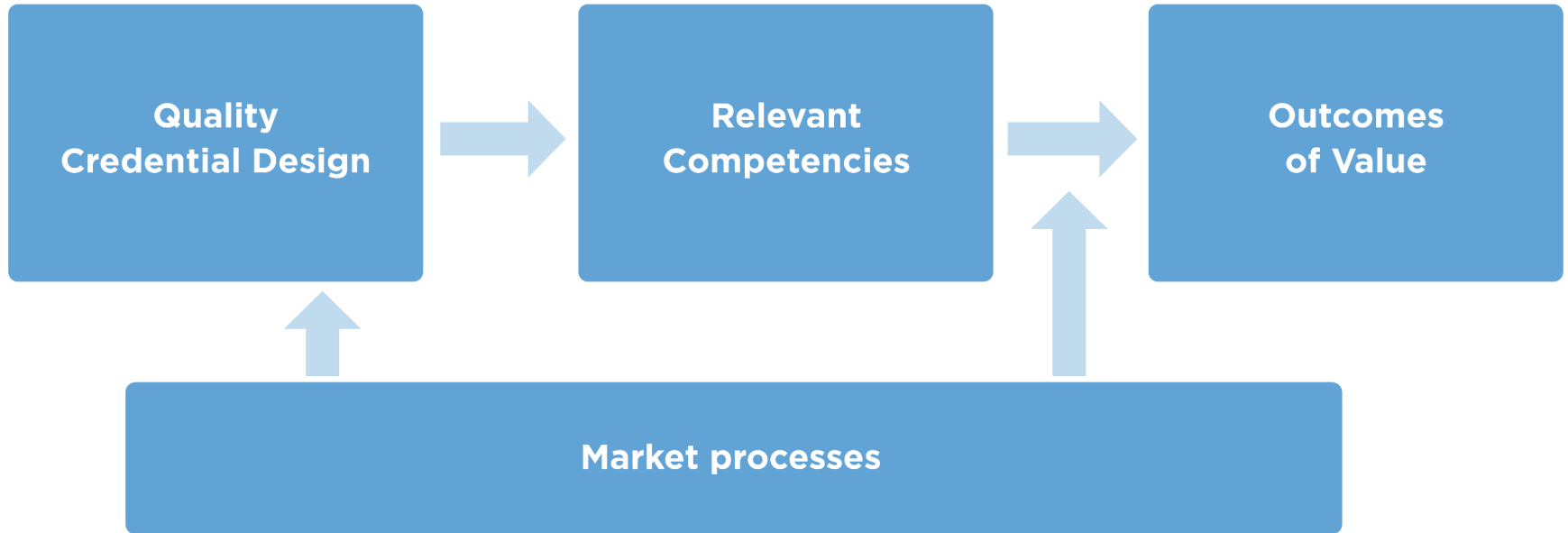
Quality Definitions Relate to Stakeholder Goals

Stakeholder	Goal	Key Questions to Consider
Individuals	Informed decision making	How do we know as an individual whether it is a good investment of time and money to pursue an NDC?
Employer	Informed decision making	How do we know whether NDCs are a useful indicator of skill and competency to be used in hiring and advancement?
Policy Makers	Accountability	How do we know whether public funds should be used to support the attainment of NDCs?
Credential Providers	Program Improvement	How can NDCs be improved?

Beginning Snapshot of the NDC Quality Ecosystem

Multiple NDC Markets Exist

	For Credit Certificates	Non Credit Certificates	Certifications	Licensure	Apprenticeships	Badges/ Microcredentials
Providers	Educational Inst.	Educational Inst.; Private Providers; Companies; Unions	Professional Associations	State Governments	State Governments; Unions	Educational Inst.; Private Providers; Employers
Influencers	State Departments of Education; Accreditors	State Departments of Education; State Departments of Labor, WIOA	Quality Assurance Organizations	State licensing departments; Professional Associations	State Departments of Labor/ US Department of Labor; Professional Associations	Badging standards and platforms

Transparency — State Departments of Education; State Departments of Labor, WIOA; National Organizations

Norm Setting — Professional Associations

Regulation — State Departments of Education; State Departments of Labor, WIOA

Summary of Current NDC Quality Efforts

- Certificates have most variation in providers and influencers
- Certifications, licensure, and apprenticeships have systems for quality—though not without challenges or limits
- Cross cutting efforts for quality are limited by lack of data and challenges of definitions; many are emergent and evolving
- States are a locus of activity, but national efforts and institutional level efforts may be complementary

For More Information…

Contact Michelle Van Noy,
mvannoy@rutgers.edu

Visit the EERC Website:
http://smlr.rutgers.edu/eerc

Join our mailing list:

State Examples

- Iowa – Paula Nissen, Administrative Consultant, Analysis & Reporting

- Louisiana – Amy Cable, Chief Student Affairs Officer, LCTCS

Questions and Discussion on Noncredit

- Where are you with noncredit data in your state and institution? (data systems? connected to credit? type of programs? outcomes?)

- What are 1-2 data issues you are working through?

- What noncredit data collection practices have worked well at your college?

- Do you have any recommendations for other colleges looking to improve their noncredit data collection?