



Spring 2024 NCRN Conference Agenda

[Post Hall](#) at George Washington University's [Mount Vernon Campus](#)
2100 Foxhall Rd. NW, Washington, DC 20007

8:00-9:00am Breakfast Available

9:00- 9:15 Welcome and “Level-Setting” on the NCRN’s History and the State of Non-degree Credentials Research

Kyle Albert (George Washington University) will present a brief overview of the five-year history of the NCRN and its changing social, political, and technological context. Much has changed over the past five years: presidents and pandemics have come and gone, stunning advances in AI and data systems have enabled new research projects and new stakeholders have entered our field – and much work remains to be done to answer some of the core research questions that motivated the creation of the Network. While this briefing will be especially beneficial to new members, we expect it to frame the discussion around strategic planning that will follow.

9:15 – 10:15 Strategic Planning for a Sustainable Future

Our strategic planning partner, HCM Strategists, will present an overview of the survey administered to NCRN members earlier this year and facilitate a structured discussion about the NCRN’s future. Please do not hesitate to tell us how the NCRN has impacted your work and share your ideas, however creative they may be, for where our community may go in the coming years. Network leadership will also describe potential options for future directions. (Facilitator: Stephanie Murphy, HCM Strategists)

10:15 – 11:15 Non-degree Quality Standards and Frameworks

Panelists will describe efforts “on the ground” to improve credential quality through policy levers and efforts to improve credential transparency, and the extent to which standards and frameworks inform that work.

- Lindsey Reichlin Cruse, National Skills Coalition
- Melanie Booth, Higher Learning Commission
- Suzanne Towns, Burning Glass Institute

11:15-11:30 Break

11:30– 12:30 Contrasting Approaches to Using Data to Gauge Credential Quality

Building on the preceding discussion, panelists will describe their respective organizations’ approaches to measuring non-degree credential quality, including an examination of the adequacy of existing public and private data sources.

- Stuart Andreson, Burning Glass Institute (presenting remotely)
- Jeff Strohl, Georgetown University Center for Education and the Workforce
- Isabel Cardenas-Navia, Workcred, an affiliate of the American National Standards Institute

12:30 – 1:30 Networking Lunch

Participants are free to dine in the meeting venue or enjoy GW’s beautiful Mount Vernon Campus.

1:30 – 2:00 Comparing Transatlantic Perspectives on Microcredentials

Hanne Shapiro (presenting remotely) of the Danish Technological Institute and Hanne Shapiro Futures will return to the NCRN through a video link to brief our community on key policy developments in the European Union, including new initiatives related to microcredential development, credential quality, and credentialing for green jobs.

2:00 – 2:40 Using Technology to Support the Transition to a Skills-Centered Labor Market

Luis Gonzalez of Tecnologico de Monterrey, the largest private university in Mexico, will present his team’s “ShapingSkills” research project, which enhances the extraction of skills from documents such as job postings. Mike Sanders of George Washington University will present an overview of the LAISER project, which applies AI large language models to overcome some of the inherent barriers in how educational institutions and labor markets communicate credential information to each other. Both projects aim to facilitate the transferability of skills within and across education systems and labor markets and complement an emerging career navigation and upskilling technology ecosystem.

2:40 – 2:55 Break

2:55-3:20 Open Forum

NCRN members are invited to give brief (3-5 minute) presentations on recent research findings or other resources that may be of interest to the community but may not fit into an existing session. Please contact Kyle Albert, kalbert@gwu.edu, to RSVP for this session.

3:20- 4:20 State and Federal Policy Trends, Implications of Short-Term Pell and WIOA Reform

Panelists will update the Network and answer questions about key policy developments affecting non-degree credential stakeholders, with a particular focus on how new policies may affect the availability of research data and how researchers may be able to gauge the impacts of policy reforms.

- David Baime, American Association of Community Colleges
- Iris Palmer, New America
- Brad Turner-Little, National Association of Workforce Boards
- Andrew Reamer, George Washington University

4:20-4:30 Concluding Remarks

Kyle Albert and Michelle Van Noy (Rutgers University) will review key themes from the conference and invite additional feedback or ideas on future directions for the Network.

4:30-5:30 Reception

Join us on the patio outside the conference venue (weather permitting) to reflect on the day and network with your peers.