FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING CERTIFICATES: A TOOL FOR ALIGNING MARKET NEEDS AND STUDENT OUTCOMES

Legislative Finance Committee

Higher Education Subcommittee

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Workforce Credentials

- **Industry-recognized certification:** skill mastery, endorsed by trade association or professional organization, formal assessment

- **Certificate**: technical skills focused on working in specific industries

- **Associate of Applied Science:** 75% technical skills courses plus 25% general education

Structure Of Certificates

Historically, the technical side of associate degrees

- Students who wanted to focus on technical skills and didn't necessarily want to take the general education

- Examples: Welding, 46 credits
  HVAC, 41 credits
  Basic Firefighter, 30 credits
  Water Technology, 28 credits

3

Structure Of Certificates

More recently,

- **Shorter certificates, discrete set of skills** needed in the workforce, often stackable, often embedded in AAS

- Examples: Cisco Networking, 16 credits
  Digital Graphics, 18 credits
  Basic Solar, 22 credits
  Early Childhood Development, 16 credits

Top 10 Certificate Programs

Certificate Program	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	3 Year Total
Emergency Medical Services	88	79	75	242
Computer & Information Technology	46	30	98	174
Creative Media Technology	38	59	37	134
Business Management	38	32	54	124
Business Office Technology	27	28	24	79
Drafting & Design Technologies	4	24	41	69
Heating, Ventilation, Air & Refrig.	12	24	22	58
Certified Nursing Assistant	13	13	23	49
Nursing	15	8	23	46
Electrical Lineworker	18	12	14	44

A Critical Tool In The Toolbox

From the industry perspective:

- Certificates allow us to respond quickly to changing conditions in the local workforce.

A Critical Tool In The Toolbox

From the student perspective:

- Provides instruction – specific workforce skills.

- Provides a broader picture of industry.

- Provides multiple on- and off-ramps that allow students to craft their college-to-career path based on their interests, goals, and circumstances.

A Critical Tool In The Toolbox

From the community perspective:

- Well-designed certificates require robust relationships between education and industry.

- Robust relationships—using the tools of workforce education, like certificates—create pathways to jobs and through careers, and contribute to prosperity in the community. . . for workers, business, and the local economy.

8

Some Commitments

- A commitment to usefulness of the certificate—for industry and for the student—is important.

- Flexibility in design process is key to ensure responsiveness to industry.

- A systematic approach to follow certificate earner into employment and to measure certificate value in the workforce is needed.

Thank you.

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