

# GIVING A HEAD START TO OUR STUDENTS: THE FUTURE OF AWARDING CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING

**John Makevich**

*Director, Special Projects at College of the Canyons*

*Technical Assistance for Strong Workforce Implementation*

*Doing What Matters for Jobs and the Economy*

*California Community College Chancellor's Office*



CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES  
**Doing What MATTERS™**  
FOR JOBS AND THE ECONOMY

# Objectives and Ground Rules

- In this session, participants will...
  - *be able to articulate what credit for prior learning is*
  - *understand the relationship between the credit hour and seat time*
  - *engage in three discussions (examining the Carnegie Unit, credit for prior learning opportunities, and the future of certification)*
  - *understand that credit for prior learning is a faculty purview*
  - *become familiar with existing statewide efforts to promote and expand on credit for prior learning*
  - *and consider the future of academic certification.*
- Ground rules
  - *I am not a fortune teller...I just play one on TV*
  - *This presentation is intended to paint a picture. You may disagree with the picture I paint, and that's A-OK*
  - *Keep an open mind! It's incredibly easy to point out what you think is wrong. Your challenge is to find what you think is right!*

# What is Credit for Prior Learning (CPL)?

- Ability to award credit for learning or work experience achieved outside the context of a community college.
- Typical forms:
  - *Advanced Placement (AP)*
  - *International Baccalaureate (IB)*
  - *CLEP*
  - *Evaluation of military transcripts*

# The awarding of CPL at Coastline



# Framework for higher education: The Carnegie Unit

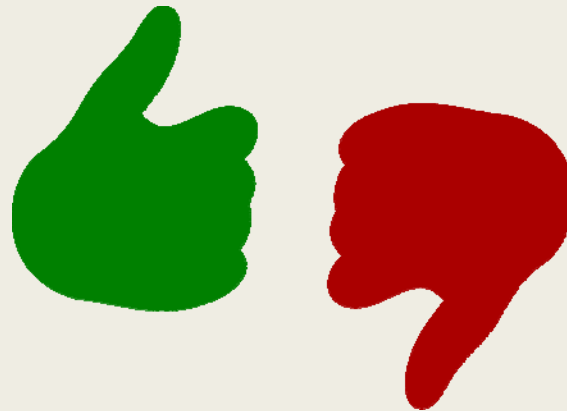
- “The standard Carnegie Unit is defined as 120 hours of contact time with an instructor, which translates into one hour of instruction on a particular subject per day, five days a week, for twenty-four weeks annually” (Silva, et. al., 2015).
- Also known as the “credit hour,” it connects seat time in a classroom to credits earned by a student.
- Goes on the assumption that learning is a function of time spent with an instructor of record, not mastery of topics or disciplines.



Silva, E., White, T., & Toch, T. (2015, January). *The Carnegie Unit: A century-old standard in a changing education landscape*. Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

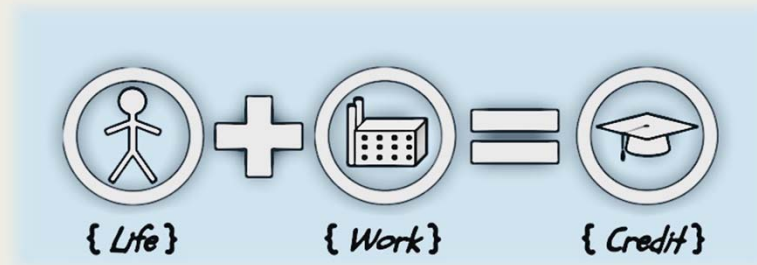
# Discussion 1 – Yay or nay

- Make two columns, one for “pros” and one for “cons” of the Carnegie Unit (or generally speaking, credits tied to seat time).
- If you were to change the currency of college credit, what might you change it to?



## Discussion 2 – Expanding on CPL

- What is the potential value of finding more ways to award credit to students for their prior learning or work experience?
- List some ways you think colleges could expand on the awarding of credit for prior learning.
- What are the pitfalls of changing or evolving the system like this?



# Why award credit for prior learning?

- Student 1
  - *Successful entrepreneur, minimal coursework, no degree*
  - *Business slipping a bit, wants to get a degree*
  - *Has to start from zero?*
- Student 2
  - *Military student*
  - *Their college provides limited credit for military experience*
  - *Has to start from zero?*
- Student 3
  - *Went through coursework in a CTE field*
  - *Got a job before completing*
  - *Has to end before the finish line...without the degree or certificate?*





# The awarding of credit is a faculty purview



- According to Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations, the following items are considered to be “academic and professional matters” (10+1) within faculty purview:
  - *Curriculum including establishing prerequisites and placing courses within disciplines*
  - *Degree and certificate requirements*
  - *Educational program development*
  - *Standards or policies regarding student preparation and success*
- The awarding of credit for prior learning overlaps with many or all of the above.  
FACULTY MUST DRIVE THIS PROCESS!!!!

# Statewide Academic Senate leadership

- Report: Awarding Credit where Credit is Due: Effective Practices for the Implementation of Credit by Exam (2014)
- Resolution (Spring 2016): Awarding Credit for Prior Learning Experience
- In summary, there's an interest in considering these new pathways, but faculty express concern that this is done carefully with some examination of unintended consequences.



ACADEMIC SENATE  
OF CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

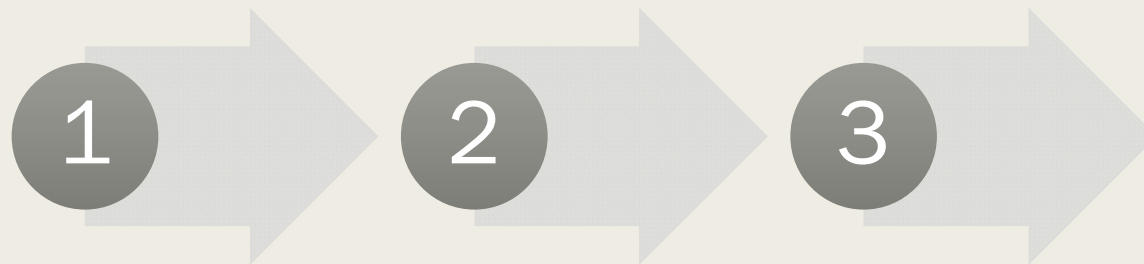
# Current CPL efforts in California

- AB 2462
  - *Chancellor's Office issued an advisory on the awarding of credit for prior learning for military students and veterans.*
- SB 466
  - *Bill would "require the board to deny or revoke approval of a school of nursing that does not give student applicants credit in the field of nursing for military education and experience by the use of challenge examinations or other methods of evaluation."*
- Strong Workforce Implementation (Doing What Matters Initiative)
- Online access to CPL opportunities (Online Education Initiative)
- Bringing this all together: Chancellor's Office ad hoc work group
  - ASCCC
  - *Doing What Matters*
  - *Online Education Initiative*
  - *College representatives (including Coastline)*
  - *Chancellor's Office: academic affairs, veterans services*



# Order of operations

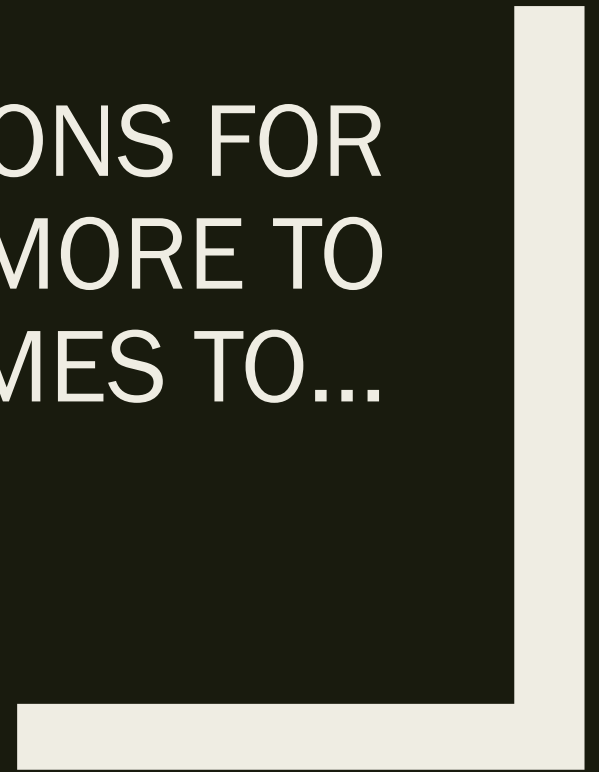
- Chancellor's Office needed to respond to AB 2462
- Both Strong Workforce Recommendations (DWM) and the Online Education Initiative call out CPL as items to be tackled
- That got the conversation going and the stakeholders at the table



# POSSIBLE next steps for Chancellor's Office work group

- IF consensus is reached with group, some POSSIBLE next steps COULD include:
  - *Work with the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) to do a sampling of existing CPL opportunities in the CCCs.*
  - *Identify a set of colleges who could:*
    - Study CPL options
    - Work to collaboratively pilot some new CPL options
    - Pair up with ASCCC to design scalable options
  - *Create an online catalog of CPL access points throughout the state (OEI objective)*
- Key focus: support veterans/military...AND everyone else

WE KNOW THE BASIC REASONS FOR  
CPL. BUT THERE'S EVEN MORE TO  
CONSIDER WHEN IT COMES TO...



...PREPARING FOR THE  
FUTURE



# Discussion 3 – Spin the wheel

- Think about THREE disruptive innovations that could (just maybe) fundamentally change our “business” model.
- What are your views on accreditation?
- If a group of faculty from MIT and Stanford gave their approval of an academic program, how much weight would that carry for you?
- One of our presidential candidates is proposing low- or no-cost public higher education. What are the benefits and/or consequences of that?





How much do you pay to  
do a Google search?



# How does Google make enough money?



- Every search you do provides Google with data about things you're interested in.
- Tied to Google accounts, they can pair that with demographic info about you.
- Tied to your phone, they can know about the kinds of places you go.
- They can then tie advertisements and information back to you that is relevant.
- They sell that access to other businesses...and they make a FORTUNE.

# Is there something more?

- YES. The more behavioral data Google has, the more tailored and valuable the ads are.
- If Google could have an even better idea of how you learn, how you time your work, what types of learning materials connect with you, how you handle success...and failure, etc., they can make a ton of money!!!!

# So, what if...

- Google expanded on their current educational efforts and created a full online “school” offering certifications of some kind (maybe digital badges)?
- Google partnered with MIT, Stanford, Harvard, etc. to validate their educational programs and give them merit.
- Students could pursue certain “degree” options through this new school that lead to alternative educational “degrees.”



# But...



- Employers want to see college degrees.
- There's no way this Google school could become accredited.
- None of this would transfer to a university.

# True, however...

- Employers (especially large organizations such as IBM and Microsoft) are less and less satisfied with the recent graduate in terms of his or her preparation for the workforce.
- If major universities partnered with Google and other large organizations to validate the new “degrees,” there is a significant chance that employers will take note. This is ESPECIALLY true if they start seeing students more prepared for the workforce.
- Though this doesn’t put community colleges out of business by any stretch, it could over time dramatically reduce the number of students seeking us out.
- No need to transfer if the new “degree” is powerful enough!





GULP.

# So, what can the community colleges do to better prepare for this possible disruption?

- Colleges could seek to validate more avenues of learning for college credit (i.e. credit for prior learning).
- Faculty could do some scenario planning around vision trajectory. How can faculty work with administration to make sure the superb teaching we do at community colleges is future-proof?
- Colleges may want to consider expanding on digital badge programs and issuing those badges in tandem with certificates and degrees. More and more employers are building robust digital badging programs for their continuing education, and we have to be ready to be compatible!




# Thanks for your time!!!

John Makevich

[John.Makevich@canyons.edu](mailto:John.Makevich@canyons.edu)

661-362-3384

 : @jmakevich

LinkedIn: <http://www.linkedin.com/in/jwmjr>