

# **State of the Art 2012 Conference**

## **Accreditation and Credentialing Update**

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George Mason  
University

# Points to be Covered

- Background on Higher Education Opportunity Act Requirements
- Accreditation Landscape
- Accreditation Workgroup: Membership, Role, Reports, Goals
- Meaningful credentials and alignment with accreditation
- Survey
- Implications for Process

# Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA)

- Financial Aid eligibility
- Eligible programs (CTPs)
- Model Demonstrations (TPSIDs)
- Coordinating Center
  - Think College at ICI/UMass

# Title IV Programs – Financial Aid

- HEA allows an eligible student with an intellectual disability (ID) attending an eligible comprehensive transition and postsecondary (CTP) program to receive:
  - Federal Pell Grant,
  - Federal Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant, and
  - Federal Work-Study programs funds

# Eligible Student

- Student must have a demonstrated financial need
- Student must be an eligible student with an ID
- Student must be enrolled in an approved CTP Program

# Eligible CTP Program - HEOA

- Physical Attendance
- Academic, career, and independent living instruction
- Prepare for gainful employment
- Includes an advising and curriculum structure
- Provides students with intellectual disabilities opportunities to participate in coursework and other activities with students without disabilities

# Current Comprehensive Transition Program (CTP) approval process

- IHEs must apply to US ED for CTP approval in order for students with ID to receive financial aid
- **FSA handles approval process**

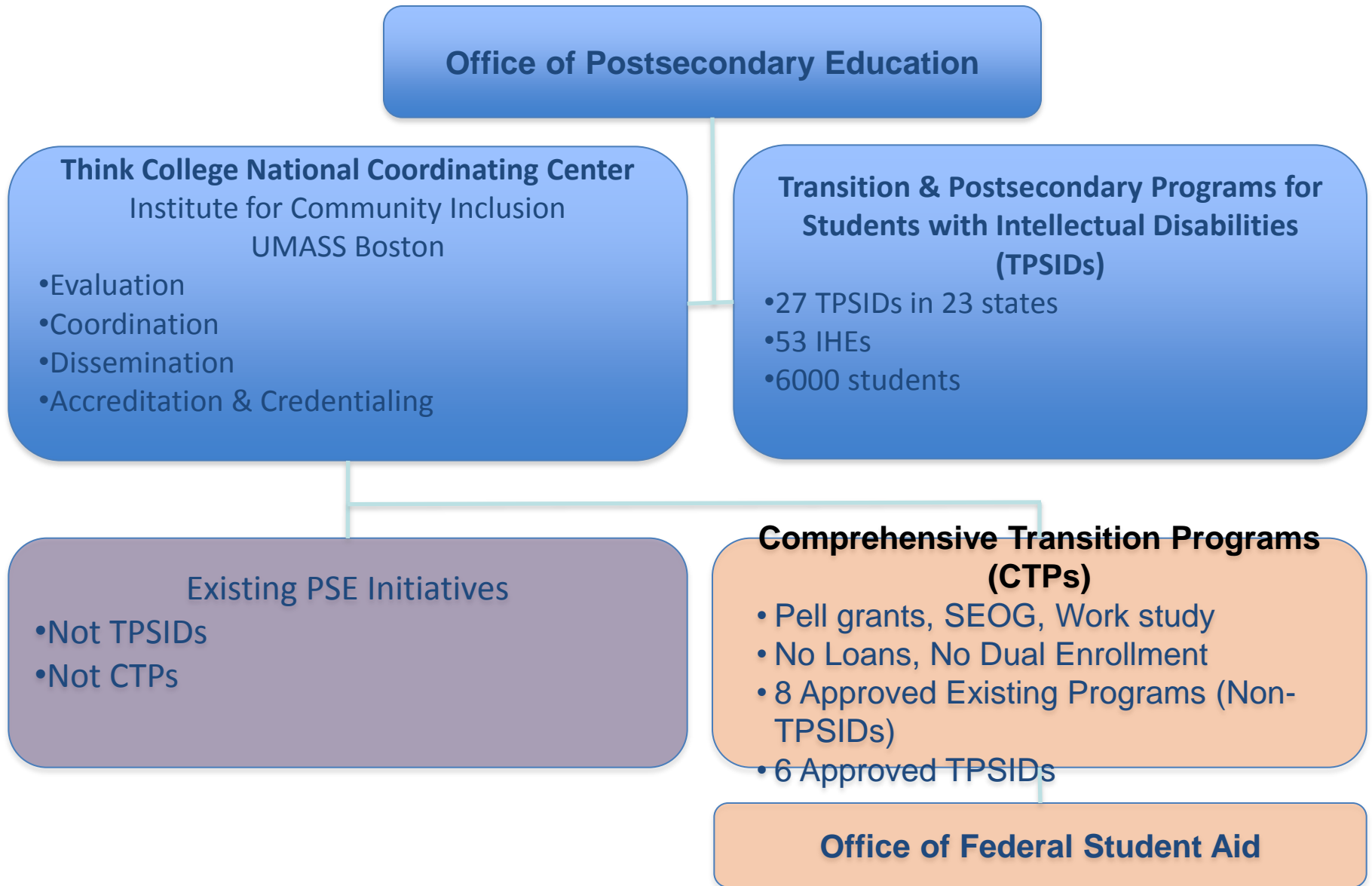
For more information:

<http://www.thinkcollege.net/for-professionals/professionals-financial-aid>

For list of approved programs:

<http://studentaid.ed.gov/PORTALSWebApp/students/english/CTPProgramList.jsp>

# Higher Education Opportunity Act & Students with Intellectual Disability





# The accreditation landscape and relationship to CTPs

- Institutional Accreditation
- Program Accreditation
- Accrediting Agency Recognition by the US Department of Education
- Issues Involving Model Accreditation Standards for Post Secondary Education (PSE) Programs for Students with ID

# Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) Recognized Regional Accrediting Organizations

<http://www.chea.org/Directories/regional.asp>

- Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools  
Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE)
  - **4 Reported**
- New England Association of Schools and Colleges  
Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (NEASC-CIHE)
  - **1 Reported**
- North Central Association of Colleges and Schools  
The Higher Learning Commission (NCA-HLC)
  - **2 Reported**
- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS)  
Commission on Colleges
  - **7 Reported**
- Western Association of Schools and Colleges  
Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (WASC-ACCJC)
  - **1 Reported**
- Western Association of Schools and Colleges  
Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities (WASC-ACSCU)

# Membership of the Accreditation Workgroup

HEOA states that the workgroup shall include:

- an expert in higher education
- an expert in special education
- a disability organization that represents students
- a representative from the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity (NACIQI)  
(See <http://www2.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/naciqi.html>)
- a representative of a regional or national accreditation agency or association

# Workgroup Members

- Dara Baldwin
- Joanne Cashman
- William E. Kiernan
- Mari Koerner
- Cheryl Jorgensen
- Judy L. Shanley
- Stephanie Smith Lee: Chair
- Jane West
- Carolyn Williams
- ThinkCollege: Meg Grigal

# Role of the Accreditation Workgroup

**HEOA requires the National Coordinating Center to convene a workgroup to develop and recommend model criteria, standards, and components\* of such programs for the development of accreditation standards**

*\*Necessary components such as—*

- *academic, vocational, social, and independent living skills;*
- *evaluation of student progress;*
- *program administration and evaluation*
- *student eligibility*
- *issues regarding the equivalency of a student's participation in such programs to semester, trimester, quarter, credit, or clock hours at an institution of higher education, as the case may be;*

# Final Report Due Year 5 (now in year 3)

Final Report of Accreditation Workgroup to be submitted to:

- The Secretary of Education
- Authorizing Congressional Committees
- National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity

Report will provide the Accreditation Workgroup's recommendations regarding:

- The development of model criteria, standards and components of PSE programs for students with ID
- that are appropriate for the development of model accreditation standards
- Any issues involving aligning the TPSID model with existing accreditation standards.

# Goals for Workgroup for 2012

- Finalize membership of workgroup
- Conduct three teleconferences and one in-person meeting
- Review regional accreditation processes
- Review existing criteria to become a Comprehensive Transition Program under FSA
- Consider how to support the development of recommended standards for accreditation.
- Consider a process for receiving input
- Prepare an annual report

# Next Steps: Accreditation

- Annual Interim Report
- Reach out to accrediting agencies
- Compare CEA & other standards
- Review the Think College quality indicators and benchmarks and compare to standards
- Role of FSA requirements for program approval
- HEOA statute & regulations for CTPs
- Begin Developing standards

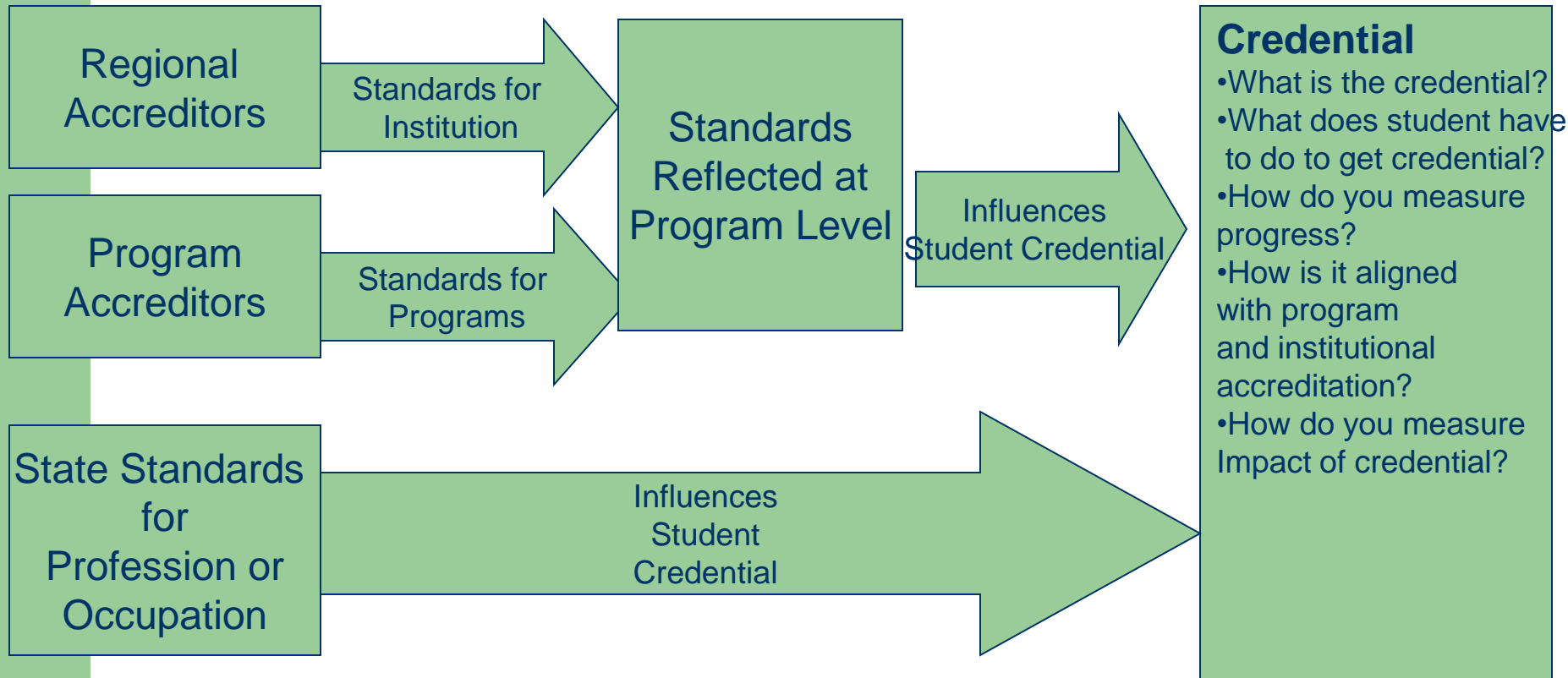


# TPSID Student Credentials

It's All About Alignment  
November 2012



# Connection between Institutional Accreditation, Program Accreditation, and Student Credentials



# Credential: Multi-Component

- The “what” or “thing” a student receives when meeting the requirements of a program.
  - Certificate, Workforce credential, diploma, etc.
- The “content” or “knowledge/skills” that a student has to complete.
- The “process” or “how” a student meets these requirements.
- The process used to develop the credential.

# Preliminary Results

- Initial results received (summer 2012)
  - Completed survey response rate =  $37/50 = 74\%$
  - 60% indicated they offer a credential

# The “What” of the Credential Process

- Career readiness credential
- Workforce credential certificate
- A sequential program in Learning and Life Skills
- Child Development Assistant Teacher

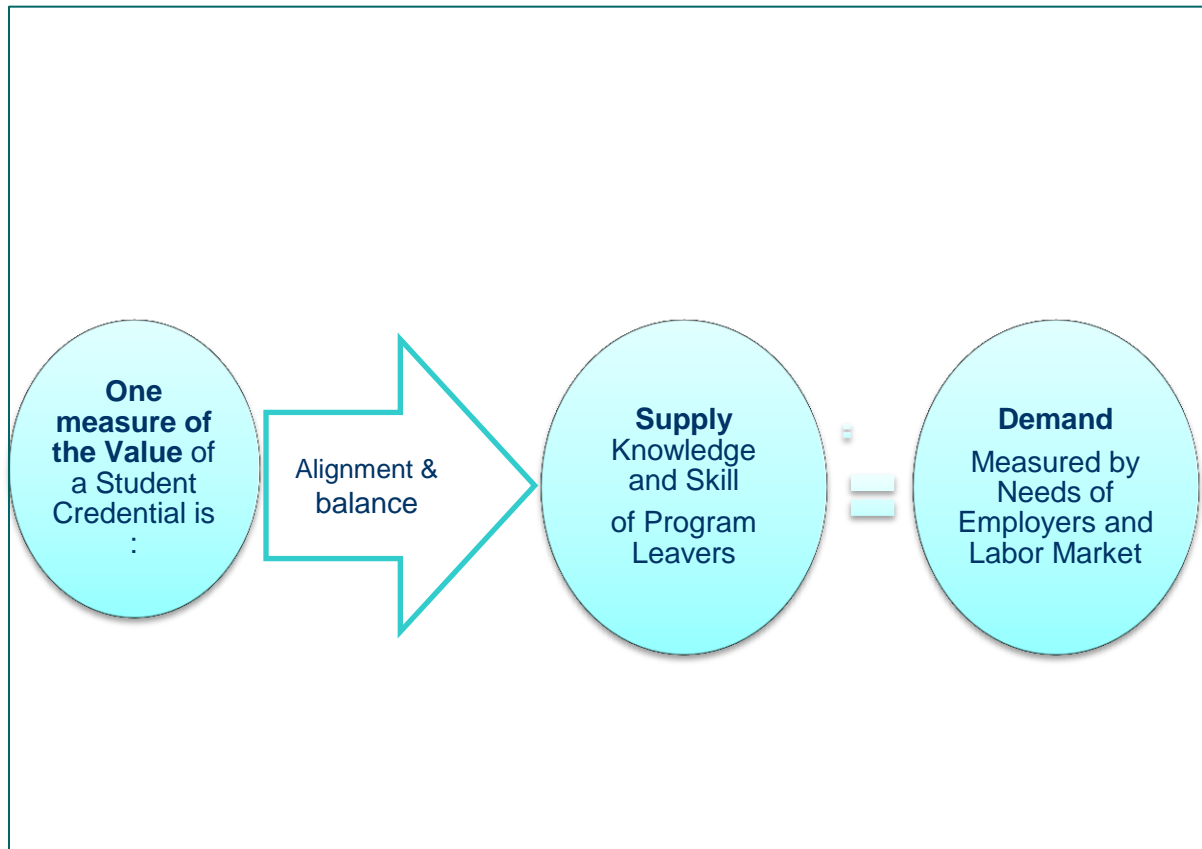
# The “Content” of the Credential Process

- Credential related to program accreditation
  - 55% did not consider
- Credential related to institutional accreditation
  - 68% did not consider
    - Worked with Provost office
    - Program review team and Vice Chancellor...

# The “Content” of the Credential Process

- Alignment Between Credential & Preparation for Life Roles
  - Labor market analyses – 14%
  - Feedback from employment-business – 36%
  - Integrated entry requirements for other postsecondary education – 23%
  - Aligned practices with independent living – 55%

# The Value of a Student Credential





# The “How” of the Credential Process

- Tools or resources used
  - 68% examined other program at institution or others
  - 55% used credential protocols on campus
  - 50% relied on external guidance

# Challenges to Credential Development

- Unsure of procedure – 40%
- Limited institutional support – 27%
- Not sure of course content for credential – 13%
- Credential not necessary to support outcomes – 7%



# **The How...Considering Accreditation and Program Standards can Support Credential Development**

# Crosswalk Across Accreditation and Program Standards

CHEA establishes standards for Regional Accreditors

Regional Accreditors establish standards for institutions of higher education

Institutions of higher education reflect their institutional accreditation standards in the standards for programs across their institution

Organizations such as ThinkCollege reflect these standards in the guidelines they offer PSE programs

# Regional Accreditor Policies

- Western Association of Schools and Colleges – Community & Junior Colleges
  - Includes a policy in its accreditation guidelines related to CTP programs
  - Specifies the requirements of what institutions must submit to the Commission (title IV regulations).

# Program Standards

- Think College developed Eight Quality Indicators, and Benchmarks
  - Academic access, career development, campus membership, self-determination, alignment with college systems and practice, coordination & collaboration, sustainability, evaluation.
- IHEs can use these standards to create, expand, or enhance programs
- Aligned with the definition of a CTP - reflect institutional and instructional practices that support a Universal Design for Learning framework as outlined in the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008.

# Example of Aligning Standards - Focus on Academics

CHEA	Regional Accreditor	Program Standards
<b>Standard A:</b> Advances Academic Quality	<b>Educational Effectiveness</b> Standard 8: Student Admissions and Retention Standard 9: Student Support Services Standard 10: Faculty Standard 11: Educational Offerings Standard 12: General Education Standard 13: Related Educational Activities	<b>Standard I: Academic Access</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Quality Indicator 1.1: Provide access to a wide array of college course types that are attended by students without disabilities.</li><li>• Quality Indicator 1.2: Address issues that may impact college course participation.</li><li>• Quality Indicator 1.3: Provide students with the skills to access ongoing adult learning opportunities.</li></ul>

# Considerations for Credential Development

- Believe in value of credential and communicate this inside & outside of the institution
- Consider the credential title
- Align content with post school demands
- Understand your institutional and program accreditation processes
- Collaborate across academic and administration institutional departments



# Next Steps

- Participate in informal conversation about credentialing
- Continue to share your stories and experiences
- Look for Think College products