

## Reflection Worksheet: Starting Points & Next Steps

**Directions:** Please plan to allot 45 minutes for an institutional strategy session. Before the team time, make sure all team members have reviewed *A More Unified Community College*. Use the first 30-40 minutes to reflect on and identify the starting point that best suits your college. Then, using the template provided, identify two steps to be taken in the next few months to begin work to align non-credit and credit programs. Discussion questions have been provided to facilitate conversation.

**Outcomes:**

- Identify two concrete steps to align non-credit and credit pathways that can be achieved in the next few months

**Team Time Discussion: Choose a Starting Point (30-40 minutes)**

- *As a team, reflect on the starting points presented in A More Unified Community College and summarized below on the left;*
- *Use the discussion questions on the right to facilitate discussion about which starting point is best for your institution; and*
- *Fill in the table below with your college's starting point and a rationale.*

Removing the Structural Divide	
<p>APPROACH: Create a new or merged division to encompass non-credit and credit departments. Facilitate pathway development and student progression between non-credit certificate and degree programs. Act as one unit through coordination, communication, and collaboration.</p> <p>TOOLS: Focus on the policies, procedures, systems, software, job descriptions, administrative functions, and supporting infrastructure required to align non-credit and credit departments.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What resonated with you from the Prince George's Community College example? Do you see similarities between this institution and your own?</li> <li>• Are any of the following shared across non-credit and credit: registration systems, financial aid procedures, software, CRMs/SISs, job descriptions? If yes, could these be assets to build from?</li> </ul>

<p>TIPS: Transformational leadership is essential to guide change.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Is there a vision for pathways that encompasses both non-credit and credit programs that has been clearly communicated and adopted by faculty and staff?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Developing Bridge Tools to Award Credit</b></p>	
<p>APPROACH: Bridge tools are used to award credit for learning in industry-focused non-credit programs when students transition into credit programs. Non-credit and credit departments may retain their organizational distinctions.</p> <p>TOOLS: Bridge tools include equivalency agreements, articulation agreements, competency-based education (CBE), credit by exam or other PLA, or credit matrices.</p> <p>TIPS: Select the bridge tool(s) that will make the transition process between non-credit and credit programs and credit awarding process as automatic as possible, without additional requirements placed on students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What resonated with you from the Salt Lake Community College example? Do you see similarities between this institution and your own?</li> <li>● What "bridge tools" is your institution currently using to award credit for learning in non-credit programs when students transition to credit programs?</li> <li>● To what extent do those bridge tools provide an automatic awarding process? What would need to be done to make these processes more automatic for the student?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Making Industry-Focused Program Credit-Based</b></p>	
<p>APPROACH: The majority of industry-focused non-credit programs pursue accreditation to become credit bearing and automatically count toward an associate's degree.</p> <p>TOOLS: Follow the accreditation process. Align curriculum and learning objectives and outcomes between workforce (formerly non-credit) programs and degree programs.</p> <p>TIPS: Have a "myth buster" or "accreditation guru" on the planning team to address questions and concerns over changes related to programs becoming credit-based.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What resonated with you from the Kentucky Community and Technical College System example? Do you see similarities between this institution and your own?</li> <li>● Is there political will to seek accreditation for high-quality non-credit programs? What would it take to achieve it?</li> <li>● Are there non-credit programs that could be considered "low-hanging fruit" (that is, widely known to be high-quality, stackable and lead to strong workforce outcomes) with which to start seeking accreditation?</li> </ul>

Reorienting for Demand-Driven Pathways	
<p>APPROACH: Design new aligned pathways for current and emerging industry demand. Some structural silos may remain. Pathways from non-credit programs are built into new programs and credential offerings.</p> <p>TOOLS: External drivers, rather than internal organization, determine pathways.</p> <p>TIPS: Be adaptive, data-infused, and partnership-based.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What resonated with you from the Monroe Community College example? Do you see similarities between this institution and your own?</li> <li>● What is the strength of your institutions' employer relationships? Are they in a position to drive this change?</li> <li>● To what extent is labor market information used to drive decision-making about both non-credit and credit program design?</li> </ul>

Starting Point	Rationale

**Team Time Discussion: Next Steps (5-10 minutes)**

→ Considering the starting point you've identified above, work with your team to prioritize concrete action steps using the template below. Use the getting started guide steps to facilitate what can be done next.

GETTING STARTED GUIDE: ADMINISTRATORS, FACULTY, AND STAFF

1. Start where you are. Begin the conversation about how the framework and starting points apply to your institution and the most relevant ways to engage alignment.
2. Be a voice for students. Start to change the discussion from primarily centered on students in credit programs to a more inclusive discussion that considers all students.
3. Make connections. Build relationships with faculty, staff, and administrators across other programs, departments, and areas of the institution or system.
4. Create alignment in your area. This could be embedding a certificate into a degree program, initiating a conversation on a process to gain credit for non-credit programs, or suggesting ways to move beyond credit by exam to articulation or equivalency agreements.
5. Collect and share data. Collect data on these initial efforts, whether quantitative or qualitative.
6. Promote pathways. Whether it is the alignment that you have created in your own area or existing pathways in your students, help make sure students know about these pathways.

Action Step	Lead	Collaborators	Start Date	Duration