

Faculty Assembly's
Educational Policy and Planning Committee ([EPPC](#))
MINUTES
December 3, 2024 | 9:00 am
via Zoom: <https://ucdenver.zoom.us/j/97522609238>

In attendance: Chair, Wendy Bolyard, School of Public Affairs; Vice Chair, Jeff Knight, CLAS; Jing Zhang, School of Business; Kodi Saylor, Library; Stephan Harke, CLAS; Matthew Shea, College of Architecture and Planning; Margaret Woodhull, CLAS; Lori Elliott, School of Education & Human Development

1. Wendy called the meeting to order at 9:02 am.

2. Approval of Minutes from November

November meeting minutes approved.

3. Microcredentials

Jeremy Lingle, Director of Microcredentials, joined the meeting at 9:05am. Jeremy tried to answer some questions raised from the last EPPC meeting.

A quick update on the progress: from spring of last year, they had a working group on micro-credentials, and received lots of recommendations. Since then, they started working on implementing those recommendations. Anything that is smaller than a program is considered a micro-credential, such as certificates. They started tracking our learners to understand what certificates they are pursuing. A new form will be built for the micro-credential program.

Jeremy reported they are working with another company together to build a model for the micro-credentials program. There is a website that lists all participants and all reports. <https://www.ucdenver.edu/offices/provost/online-education/microcredentials-working-group> They are in the process of figuring out who will review the micro-credentials. The concern is the duplication and competition among different schools. They plan to start the de-duplication process in the Spring 2025.

The group discussed the challenges of integrating non-degree learners into the current infrastructure, highlighting the lack of clarity on the resources required for this effort. Jeremy responded by explaining that micro-credential programs are optional and not mandatory, and that they aim to provide a structured pathway for students to progress through a program. He also mentioned the benefits of micro-credentialing, such as improved engagement and retention. Concerns were raised about the applicability of micro-credentialing in humanities and interdisciplinary studies, where learning is more integrative than stackable. Jeremy acknowledged these concerns and mentioned that some institutions have successfully clustered courses in certain fields. The discussion ended with the need to consider the skills gained through completing early courses and the possibility of badging these skills.

The groups raised the issue of challenges with collaboration and the potential of micro-credentials to encourage more engagement. They also touched on the financial aspects of their projects, expressing past struggles with funding models and tuition fees. Jeremy mentioned a recent conversation about a program between SPA and CAP, highlighting the need for ownership and clear distribution of funds. They also discussed the potential of using existing technologies like Slate for non-degree and non-credit offering applications. The conversation ended with Jeremy expressing the need to document current practices and explore future Slate possibilities.

Jeremy explained that digital badges could be awarded to all learners, regardless of their enrollment status, and would include metadata such as the skills gained and assessment methods. Concerns were expressed about the faculty role in advising students and the potential differences in content for students receiving badges versus those pursuing a degree. Jeremy acknowledged these as unanswered questions and committed to providing more information. The conversation also touched on the need to increase student enrollment and retention.

Jeremy discussed the benefits of digital badges for both employers and students. He mentioned that 70% of employers prefer candidates with a degree plus a micro credential over those with just a degree. He also highlighted the importance of digital badges in helping students gain the language to describe their skills and make them stand out in job interviews. The idea was shared that students not just take one course for a badge, but rather for specific courses to be identified that contribute to a badge. This relates to stackable credentials, which allow students to transfer their credits from non-credit courses to credit courses.

Participants discussed the challenges of offering micro-credentials to students who may not have a traditional classroom setting. The need for modifications in the application process for such students was highlighted. Jeremy suggested that these students could complete the knowledge part of the micro-credential and then present evidence of the experiential part, similar to a credit for prior learning process. He also mentioned that digital badges would allow students to showcase specific skills gained and share them on LinkedIn. Concerns were expressed about the market demand for micro-credentials, suggesting that they might not be as valuable as those offered by big tech companies. Jeremy agreed, suggesting that the value of micro-credentials should be guided by market intelligence data and industry partnerships. A question about how these micro-credentials would be recognized for students was addressed by Jeremy, who explained that digital badges would allow students to showcase their skills and share them on LinkedIn.

One department recently launched a certificate program, and a student who was initially enrolled in the degree program opted to switch to the certificate instead. The group discussed the best practices for micro-credentials and certificates, with Jeremy suggesting that these could be used as an on-ramp for new students or as a way to test the waters for those who may not be ready for a full degree. Jeremy also highlighted the additional workload involved in creating and assessing modularized courses, and the need for administrative support and data to justify the implementation of such programs.

Jeremy offered to provide a reading list and answer further questions via email or future consultations. The team expressed concerns about the potential impact on faculty governance and the value of a degree. Jeremy recognized this effort is going to be more work for faculty. The issues on payment, fees, time are still ongoing.

Jeremy was specifically asked about the following, and not all concerns were addressed:

1. The potential impact of microcredentials on student enrollment and degree programs.
2. Evidence that microcredentials generate new revenue and/or attract new students.
3. Student and employer perspectives/expectations of microcredentials.
4. The value of a badge vs. a degree.
5. The motivation behind offering microcredentials.
6. The resources to support microcredentials (development, administration, delivery).
7. The differentiation of content and experiences for microcredential seeking students vs. degree seeking students as related to expectations of faculty.
8. Cost, quality, and support for microcredential students.
9. Assessment practices/expectations for microcredentials.
10. The enrollment (admission) process for microcredential seeking students vs. degree seeking students.
11. Tracking and verifying badges.
12. Benchmarks evidenced in practice or research that CU Denver aspires to.

Jeremy may be invited for further discussion in the spring.

4. Academic Transformation Working Groups

- Progress reports available [here](#).
 - Reimagining the Core
 - Academic Program Viability
 - Workload Parity
 - Time Use and Scheduling

5. Graduate Council

Wendy: The provost will hire a consultant to work with the graduate council.

6. Other Business / Announcements

None

7. Adjournment: Meeting ended on 10:02am