



# Recognizing Prior Learning for College Credit



**30 May 2014**

**Joel Simon, Vice President**











# WHAT IS PLA?





# What Is PLA?

A set of *well-established, researched and validated methods* for assessing non-collegiate learning for college credit

A process that allows learners to demonstrate knowledge and skill in particular field or fields and have that learning evaluated for college credit



## Sources of College Level Learning



On-the-job  
learning



Employer &  
Workforce  
Training



Independent  
study, MOOC's



Military  
service



Volunteer  
service





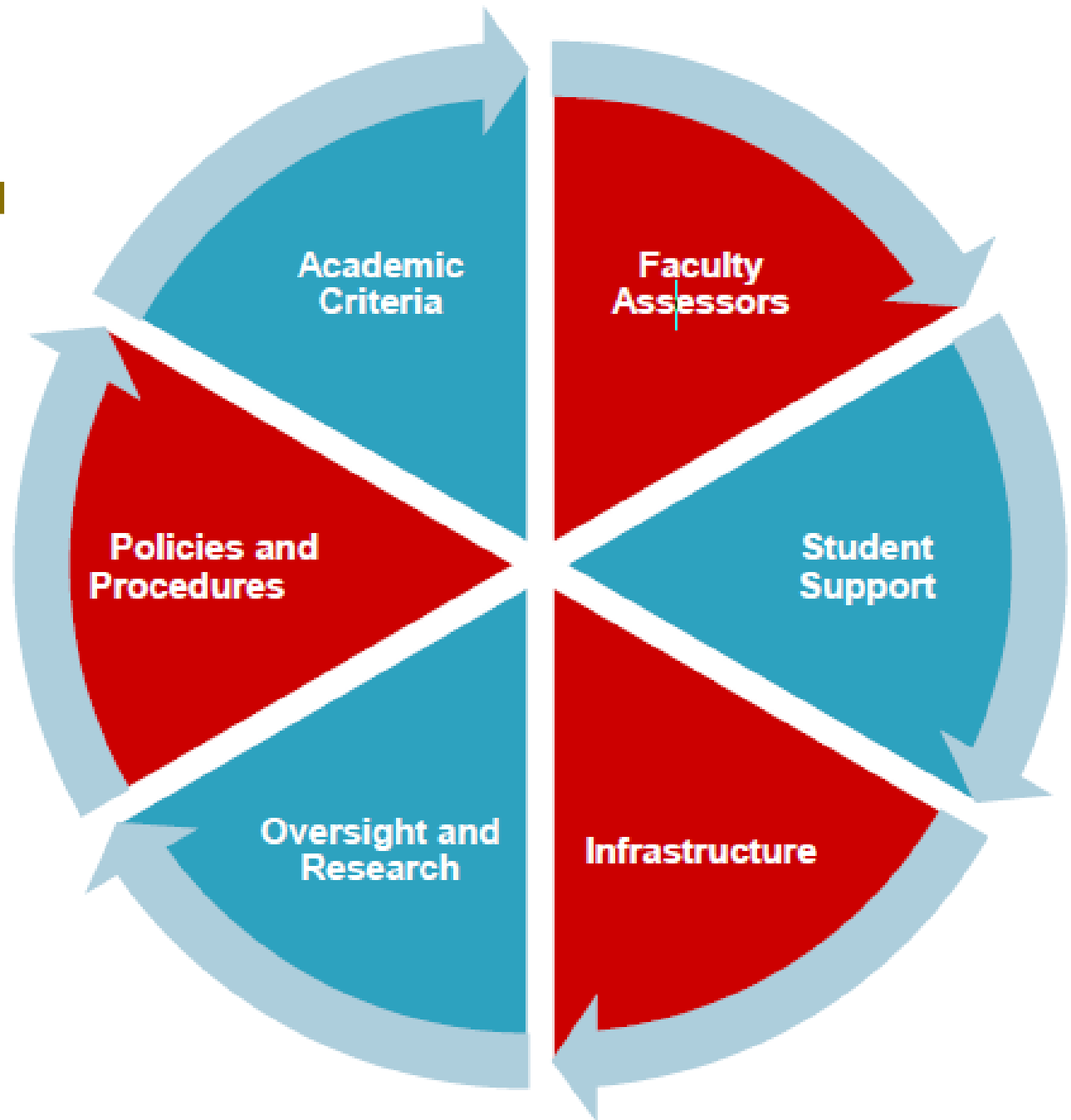


# PLA Policy Infrastructure





## Elements of a PLA Program Infrastructure





# Standards





# Guiding Principles:

- **Validity:** Is the evidence directly related to the skills and knowledge being assessed against course learning outcomes
- **Sufficiency:** Is there enough evidence of the right quality to demonstrate the learner's knowledge and skill
- **Authenticity:** The evidence is verifiably the candidate's own work
- **Consistency:** Are policies, assessment methods, guidance and promotion applied equitably and evenly?





# Academic Standards



Credit or its equivalent should be awarded only  
for learning, not experience





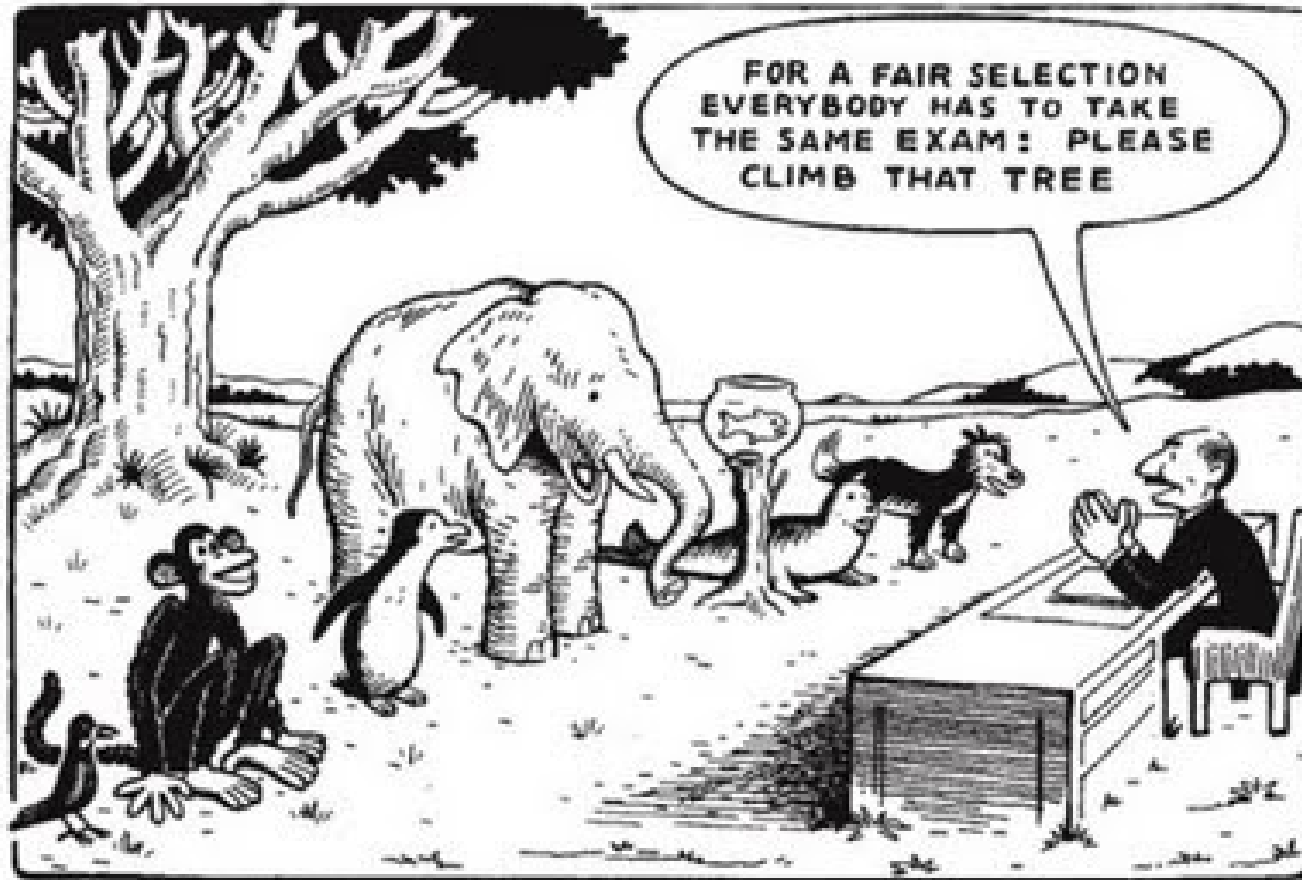
# Academic Standards

Assessment should be based on standards and criteria for the **level of acceptable learning** that are both agreed upon and made public





# Academic Standards



Credit or credentialing should be appropriate to the context in which it is awarded and accepted.





# Academic Standards

Assessment should be treated as an  
integral part of learning, not  
separate from it





# Academic Standards

The determination of credit awards and competence levels must be made by appropriate subject matter and academic or credentialing experts.





# Administrative Standards

Policies, Procedures and Criteria should be **fully disclosed** and prominently available, including provision for appeal

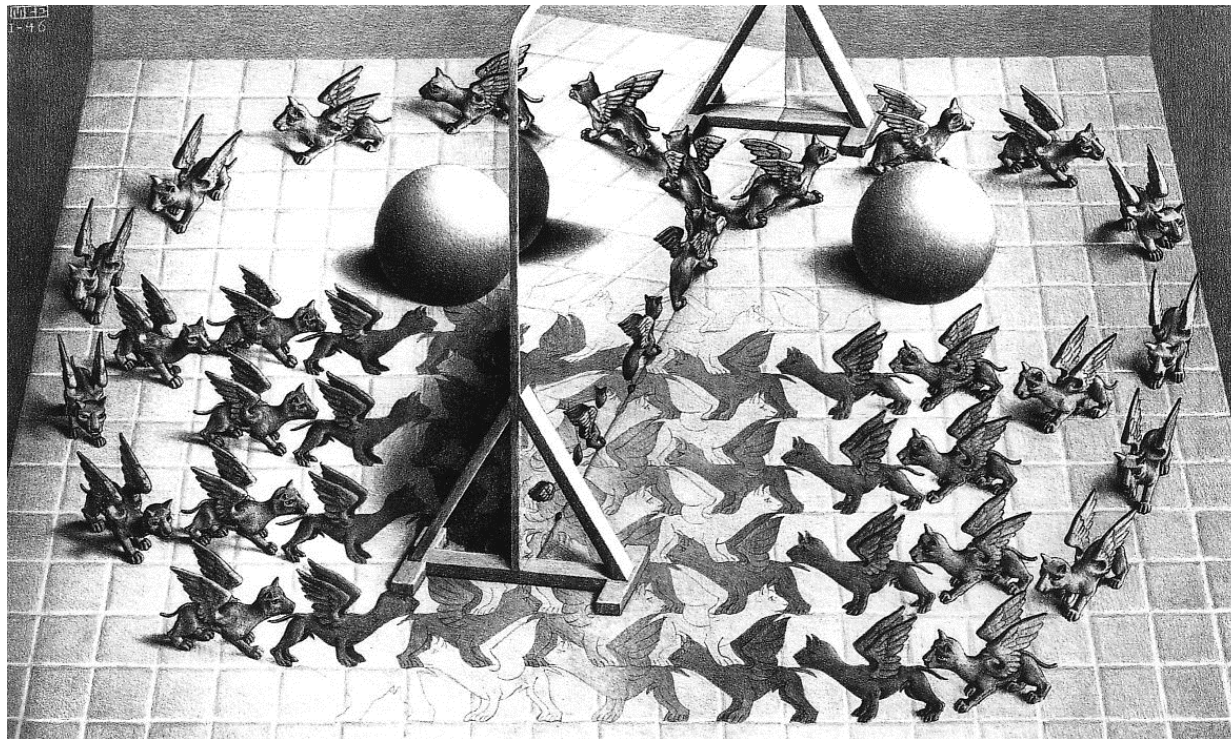






# Administrative Standards

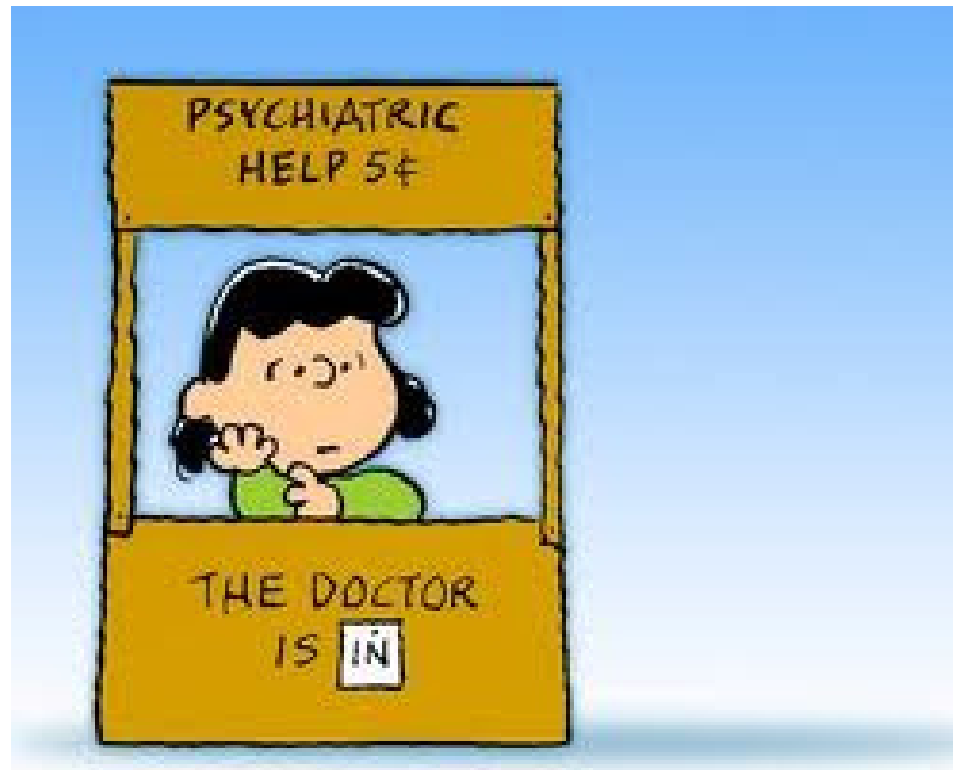
Transcript entries should **clearly describe what learning is being recognized**, and be monitored to avoid giving credit twice for the same learning





# Administrative Standards

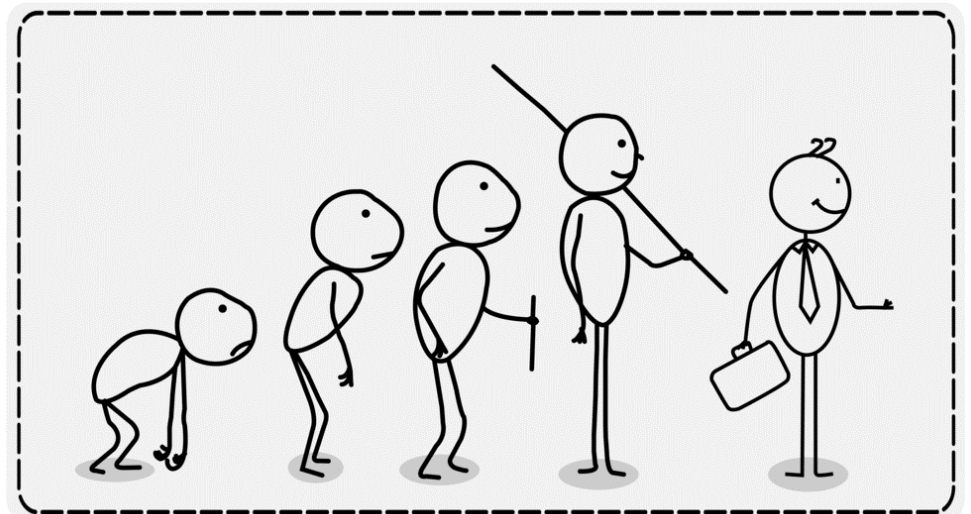
Fees charged for assessment should be based on the **services performed** and not determined for the amount of credit awarded





# Administrative Standards

Assessment programs should be **regularly monitored**, reviewed evaluated and revised as needed to reflect changes in the needs being served, the purposes being met, and the **state of the assessment arts**.







# Key PLA Methods





How do we  
demonstrate  
creditable prior  
learning?

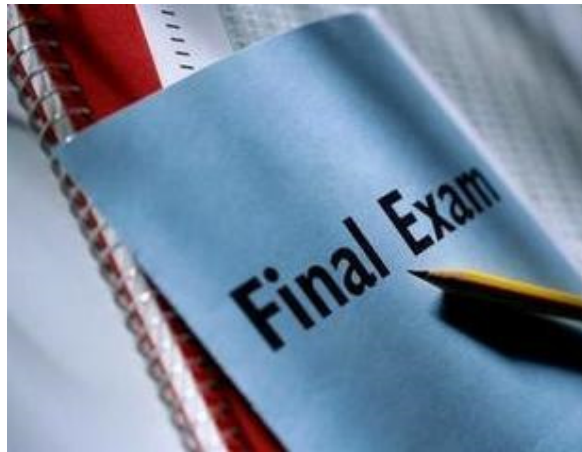
- Pass It
- Provide It
- Prove It





# Pass It

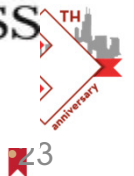
Institutional Challenge Exam  
Certification Exam  
Other Standardized Testing



**CLEP**  
College Level Exam Program



NATIONAL  
CAREER READINESS  
CERTIFICATE®





# Standardized Tests: AP

## Advanced Placement Exams (AP)



- **Produced by College Board**
- **34 Exams in 19 subject areas**
- **2012: 3.7 million exams were taken by more than 2 million students at over 18,000 high schools**
- **Except for 3 Studio Art exams with portfolio assessments, exams contain multiple-choice questions and free-response section**
- **More than 3,800 colleges & universities annually receive AP Exam scores. Most 4-year colleges in U.S. provide credit or advanced placement for qualifying scores**
- **ACE-reviewed and recommended for college credits**





# Standardized Tests - CLEP

## College Level Examination Program (CLEP)

- Produced by College Board
- 33 tests 5 subject areas
- Covers material taught in first 2 years of college: “101” level material
- 3 to 12 credits for each exam taken
- Miami Dade College: credit accepted for all 33 CLEP exams; up to 45 credit-by-exam credits may be awarded
- Over 5 million users since 1967
- Nearly 90% of U.S. colleges accept CLEP





# Standardized Tests: DSST

## Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Support (DSST-DANTES)

- Developed for the military, available to civilians
- 38 exams for upper and lower division courses
- Administered by Prometric
- Recognized by over 2,000 colleges and universities for awarding of college credit for passing scores
- ACE-reviewed and recommended college credit for all exams







# Standardized Tests: UExcel

## UExcel and Excelsior College Examinations (ECE)

- UExcel Excelsior College Examination Program:
  - Credit by examination program offered by Pearson VUE at thousands of test centers globally
  - UExcel currently offers over 50 exams in 5 areas: Business, Humanities, Natural Sciences/Mathematics, Social Sciences and History, and Nursing
- Excelsior College Exams (ECE) exams
  - specifically for Excelsior College associate and bachelor degree program nursing students with prior clinical experience
- ACE reviewed and recommended college credit for all UExcel and ECE exams





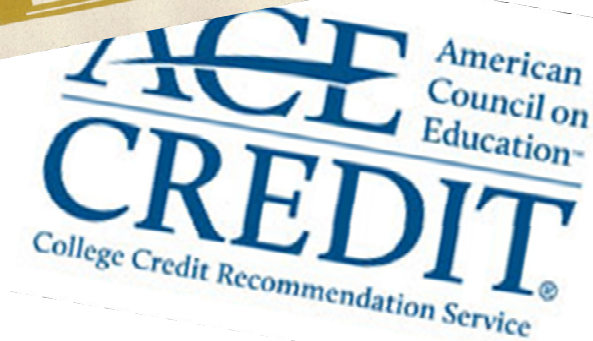
# Challenge Exams

- At institutional discretion, using locally-developed tests/exams
- MDC: “Departmental Credit by Examination”
- May be actual course final exams
- Option available at about 60% of U.S. institutions





# Provide It





# Evaluated Training: ACE

## American Council on Education (ACE)

Program Evaluations (faculty driven)

- Military Programs
- Corporate Programs (ACE CREDIT®)



Evaluation Activities

- Evaluate formal military training and occupational specialties
- Evaluate formal workplace training courses, certifications, apprenticeship programs, government agencies, examinations, and MOOCs



Federal Aviation  
Administration





# ACE Military Guide Online

**College Credit for Military Service**

## Military Guide Online



The ACE Military Guide Online presents ACE recommendations for formal courses and occupations offered by all branches of the military. All recommendations are based on ACE reviews conducted by college and university faculty members who are actively teaching in the areas they review. New courses and occupations are continually being evaluated by ACE, and these entries are added on a daily basis.

The **Military Guide Online** includes all evaluated courses and occupations from 1954 to the present.

• [www.militaryguides.acenet.edu](http://www.militaryguides.acenet.edu)





# The National Guide



Welcome to CREDIT

The **American Council on Education's** College Credit Recommendation Service (CREDIT) connects workplace learning with colleges and universities by helping adults gain access to academic credit for formal courses and examinations taken outside the traditional classroom.

Learn more about CREDIT



National  
GUIDE

Find a  
COURSE OR EXAM

Colleges and  
UNIVERSITIES

Request  
TRANSCRIPTS

ABOUT

CONTACT

## the NATIONAL GUIDE TO COLLEGE CREDIT FOR WORKFORCE TRAINING

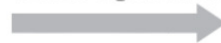
The ACE National Guide to College Credit for Workforce Training contains ACE credit recommendations for formal courses or examinations offered by various organizations, from businesses and unions to the government and military.

View organizations below or [search for a specific course or exam](#).



### the NATIONAL GUIDE

browse organizations



ACT Education Solutions

ACT, Inc. Workforce Development Division

ALEKS Corporation (McGraw Hill)

AMC Logistics Leadership Center

American Bankers Association

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, Inc.

American Management Association

American Payroll Association (APA)

American Registry of Magnetic Resonance Imaging Technologists

American Society of Military Comptrollers

American Society of Pension Professionals & Actuaries (ASPPA)

• [www.acenet.edu/nationalguide](http://www.acenet.edu/nationalguide)







# Evaluated Training: NCCRS

- National College Credit Recommendation Service (National CCRS) (formerly National PONSI)
- Evaluates training programs offered by corporations, unions, religious organizations and proprietary schools
- Over 1,500 cooperating colleges and universities consider granting college credit based on NCCRS recommendations and in accordance with their own transfer policies
- Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York

• [www.nationalccrs.org](http://www.nationalccrs.org)





## Local Evaluated Training

- College faculty assess local employer-provided training or union apprenticeship programs
- College faculty evaluate and articulate college's own non-credit courses/programs to credit courses/programs
- Colleges establish credit awards, and in some cases develop course crosswalks, for industry certifications:
  - Florida Department of Education Gold Standard Career Pathways Articulation of Industry Certification to AAS/AS Degree





# Prove It

- Prior Learning Portfolio
- Demonstration of Skills



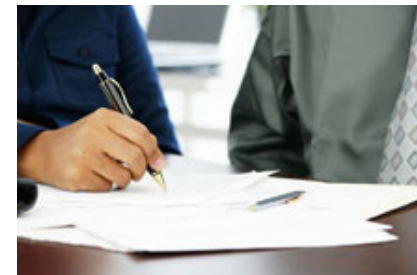
College credit for what you already know™





# Individualized Assessment

- Learning Portfolio: Most common individual approach to demonstrating college-level learning
- Other methods: Simulations or demonstrations, formal presentations, performance demonstration and faculty interviews
- Course-match approach most often used, with growing use of discipline or competency-based approach to documentation and evaluation of learning portfolios for college credit
- Discipline specific faculty critical to portfolio and other individualized assessments





# Portfolio Assessment

## What is a portfolio?

- Formal communication prepared and presented by student and presented to college as part of petition requesting credit or recognition for learning outside college classroom
- Must make case for credit by identifying learning clearly and succinctly – usually through learning narrative
- Provides sufficient supporting information and documentation so that faculty can use it as basis for evaluation

**Portfolio course or non-credit workshop usually used to help students prepare portfolio/s**

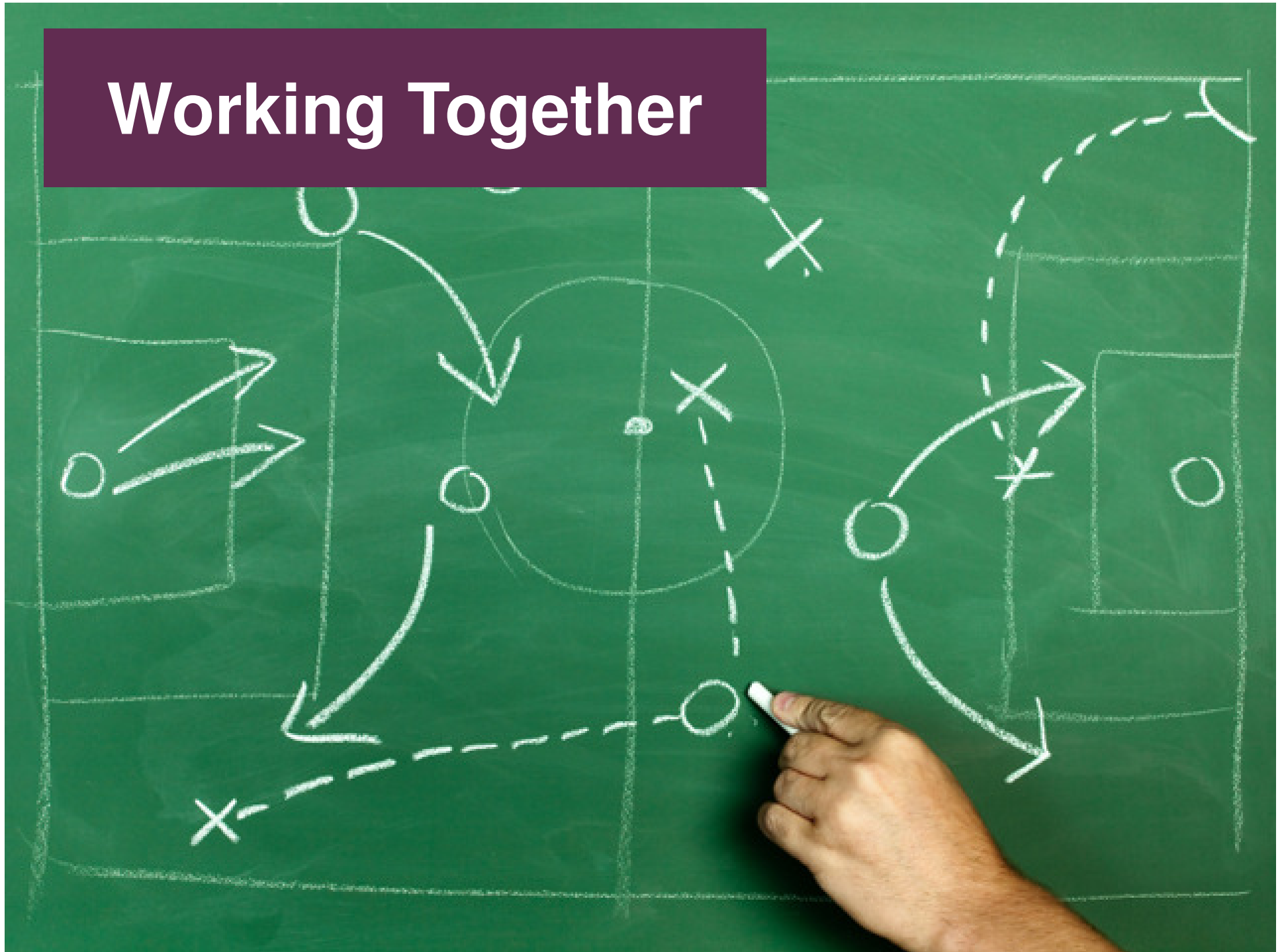


Learning  
Counts.org™

College credit for what you already know™



# Working Together





# Stakeholder Alignment

## At the College Level

- Defined Processes, Process Improvement
  - Documentation, Communication, Handoffs
- Professional Development
- Assessment Infrastructure
- Abundant Local Skills
- Prioritizing Industries
- Local Outreach
  - Employers
  - Workforce System
  - Community Based Organizations





# Stakeholder Alignment

## At the State Level

- Common definitions (Program and Data)
- Common Process Mapping Formats
- Professional Development
- Common Rubrics, Methods for Common Content
- Student Outreach
- Employer Outreach
- Referral, Recruitment Processes
- Practice Review







# Moving Forward Today

- Administration and Institutional Leaders (123)
- Academic Deans and Faculty Leaders (115 and M112)
- Student Services Leaders (M157 and M158)
- National Aviation Consortium (M109)

