**WorkforceGPS**

**Transcript of Webinar**

**Increasing Academic Achievement: SkillsCommons Field Guide of TAACCCT Innovations**

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LAURA CASERTANO: Again, I want to welcome everyone and I'm going to turn things over to your moderator today, Cheryl Martin. She's the TAACCCT program manager with the Division of Strategic Investments, Employment and Training Administration. Cheryl, take it away.

CHERYL MARTIN: Hello everybody and welcome. So delighted that you've joined us today. It looks like about a third of you from the last glimpse I got of that, are from colleges, about a third from the workforce system and about a third from community service providers or elsewhere. So that's a great mix.

I'm Cheryl Martin from the U.S. Department of Labor and I'd like to introduce my co-moderator for this series, Erin Berg, who is the community college specialist at the U.S. Department of Education. So we'll be hearing from Erin in just a moment.

Our presenters today were involved with a program called TAACCCT. And in case you're not familiar with that, it was a $2 billion seven-year grant that wrapped up just last month. TAACCCT provided funds to increase the ability of community colleges to address many of the challenges that today's workforce is facing, particularly dislocated workers like TAA workers and other adults; and to specifically address those challenges in the context of going back to get an education at a community college.

While TAACCCT was only authorized for four rounds, the impact is expected to last a lot longer because of the things that the colleges did, like developing the Credit for Prior Learning and the IT Pathways program that you'll be hearing about today.

So I'm going to turn it over to Erin now to tell us a bit about this webinar and the series that it's part of. Erin?

ERIN BERG: Thanks, Cheryl, and hi everyone. Thank you for having me today on this webinar. In my role with the Office of Career Tactical and Adult Education at the U.S. Department of Education, I'm privileged to assist the nation's community colleges, students, and related stakeholders.

And in this role, I get to hear about all the amazing things that colleges are doing and I also get to hear, though, when they have challenges and are looking for resources. And I've particularly liked working with my colleagues at the Department of Labor on SkillsCommons and the series.

SkillCommons really highlights incredible models, case studies, templates, processes, and lessons learned in a variety of areas that can help benefit students and individuals looking for training. So today's webinar will showcase some exciting and so far quite successful assessment and learning opportunities for students, connecting them with employers through some activities at Ivy Tech Community College.

And then we'll learn about how a consortium of 16 colleges in Wisconsin joined together on a Credit for Prior Learning policy that has incredible promise to reduce tuition and time to completion for students. So thank you to our presenters and for joining us today and for supporting the student's success in your states and through sharing your projects hopefully nationwide.

This webinar is part of a fall series of webinars and is actually part two of a series that started last spring. So as you can see here, you have one more chance to catch a live webinar which will be on October 24th, on adult learning strategies. Past webinars in this list and beyond are also recorded and available on WorkforceGPS through that link there, and I hope that you can join us on the 24th.

And with that, I'll turn it back over to Cheryl and I'll talk to you guys all later during the question and answer period.

MS. MARTIN: All right. Thank you, Erin. So going back to that opening poll about open educational resources. So it looks like about a quarter of you are using OER regularly and half of you have started to use it, which is great. And another quarter of you are like, "What is that all about?"

So I wanted to just very briefly share that because what's being shared today is in the context of a bunch of open educational resources that are available for you. So all of 700 TAACCCT funded college developed, nearly 2,700 new or revised programs of study, like the curriculum for manufacturing or health care or an IT program at a community college.

And then grantees also developed – because they were really busy – they also developed new ways of doing things, like training workforce navigators or job development career coaches or IT pathways or Credit for Prior Learning, and that can go on and on and on. And all the TAACCCT grantees were required to share the materials that they developed, whether it's curriculum or program materials, on this website called SkillsCommons.

So you can see the link there for that. There's a lot, a lot of free resources there for you. That's what open means. And you can grab them, you can use them, you can change them. You can do as you wish with them. And we have – last month, we had 91,000 downloads of the materials from SkillsCommons, which says to me that there's people finding things on there that are really valuable. We're going to start a meme called SkillsCommons is a goldmine, because we keep hearing that from people.

So anyway, the kind of things that you're hearing about today are in a piece of SkillsCommons that's called the Field Guide: Gallery Edition. And there's video interviews and links and more information about exactly the kinds of things you're going to hear about today. But lucky for you, you are here today hearing directly from a couple of folks who are part of the field guide.

And so I want to introduce them and turn things over to them so they can share their stories with you. Anne Kamps is the Dean of Learning Solutions at Northeast Wisconsin Technical College and she said it's rainy and dreary in Wisconsin where she is right now.

Matthew Cloud is the – teaches and chairs at the School of Information Technology at Ivy Tech Community College of Indiana. He said it's 70 degrees and cloudy where he is. So I'm going to turn it over to each and you with your respective weather reports – and actually first I'm going to turn it over to Anne and let you tell us about some of the things that you have done.

ANNE KAMPS: Great. Thank you, Cheryl. Good afternoon, everyone. Again, I'm Anne Kamps, Dean of Learning Solutions at Northeast Wisconsin Technical College in Green Bay, Wisconsin. Our college was the lead college for round 2 TAACCCT grants, so we were at the earlier part of these projects.

And I just want to give you a little background just to the Wisconsin technical college system. We are 16 colleges. We operate under a shared governance model with responsibility for operations and oversight shared by both the board at the WTCS system level and the 16 district local college boards.

We offer more than 500 two-year associate degrees, one in two-year technical diplomas and short-term credentials as a system. And, again, we were – NWTC specifically was the lead. It was the first time all 16 colleges in our state worked together in a project such as this, and it was quite a challenge, as I said, at that lead side.

So what I'll be sharing with you today is our experience and a bit of the after-story, the success or opportunities we still have with Credit for Prior Learning. I will say it is not for the faint of heart to go after Credit for Prior Learning, but it is extremely valuable and a worthy endeavor.

So we, as we received our TAACCCT grant, really strategically thought about how we would go about thinking systematically about Credit for Prior Learning, and we thought about it in the framework of an innovation.

So we did know that in our TAACCCT work, we were responsible for leveraging Credit for Prior Learning, doing some work with it. We, as a set of colleges, also wanted to create some opportunities to expand and sustain a model for Credit for Prior learning, both at our individual institutions and at the system level.

So as we thought back about what were the building blocks we leveraged, I have them on the screen, and I won't read them all to you, but I'll give you a little bit of understanding about why these were our building blocks.

First, we leveraged the TAACCCT opportunity and the deliverable of Credit for Prior learning and we actually thought to build a Credit for Prior Learning tool in our manufacturing sector, which is the project we were involved in. It was a manufacturing-focused grant. We built a tool for welding, which is a major industry in the Wisconsin area.

We brought all the colleges together. All 16 had representatives even if welding was not their project in this product of TAACCCT. We aligned the student learning outcomes and the folks in that project actually built and tested a tool that we can now use statewide. So it was an early success about, mechanically, how to put it together.

We then really looked at, to our project manager – we had a lead project manager over this project, and we really designed a shared vision, looking at other institutions that had successfully brought Credit for Prior Learning into their institutions. We connected individual colleges with some system WTCS, the Wisconsin Technical College System goals.

We are a state that has moved to outcomes-based funding and we could see it coming and this was one of the outcome-based funding measures. So we wanted to be strategic about our interactions both locally and systematically.

We knew that we didn't know enough as a system, so we leveraged the resources of CAEL, the Council on Adult and Experiential Learning. We brought people to the conference. We really tried to leverage the national influence, gained experience looking at other colleges, and then that helped create more buy-in at the college level, or at least interest.

And then strategically, we wanted colleges to produce something so they really had some vested interest. So we developed with our TAACCCT money a three-part webinar training for process mapping so individual colleges could really look at the key inputs and processes that went on in Credit for Prior Learning and really look to identify where the gaps or opportunities lie.

And then each college explored how they could best put those into practice. So those were our basic building blocks that we leveraged. As we were going through this work, we then turned our attention to scaling. So interest was one piece. Now we wanted to scale. So we set out and created a vision that we called our goal.

Our goal was to create a systematic, simple, speedy and seamless process for Credit for Prior Learning. It meant that we needed to have buy-in at multiple levels. Certainly at the executive level and the senior leader level, but at all levels of the organization. And that in itself is a lofty project when you work with 16 individual colleges in a system office.

We explored how – what a business model would look like. Why were colleges involved in Credit for Prior Learning? What were they hoping to do for students? What did they hope to get out of it from – for their organization? That became a significant conversation.

We looked at foundation-supporting scaling elements, such as bringing faculty into the mix, advising into the mix. It is more than a website and a marketing campaign. And what we learned through all of this was training across the board became critical. Training is both the why of CPL and the how you do it at all levels. Faculty, advising, marketing, leadership. So those were our foundational scaling pillars that we used.

We then looked forward and thought about sustainability. If we got interest, which we had, and if we looked at how we were going to scale, how would we sustain the scaling we achieved? So that's where we put our focus. So our focus went in these really four major areas.

College administration, making sure we continually had buy-in at all levels. Creating positions, or more often redesigning positions, which is what most colleges did so that they had capacity to create someone who was responsible for leading the efforts at the individual colleges. It became critical to keep that population having buy-in for us.

We knew we needed quality assurance. Everybody wanted to look at data and we found that it was very difficult or often nonexistent, so we really wanted to think about a quality assurance process. Data that would speak to administrators that would speak to faculty, that would speak to institutions, that would speak to our system office about the work we were doing and how we knew we were going to make progress to some elements that we were paying attention to.

And then, again, faculty support, very critical. We knew it from the literature. We did some survey work with our faculty and all of them came up with this generally – they weren't always necessarily comfortable to put Credit for Prior Learning into practice. So we knew we had to put some attention there and there were concerns often related to student success. So we knew that that was an important element we had to think about in order to sustain the work we were undertaking.

So as I mentioned, training, it was a very important topic that came out and it was something that we wanted to really put some attention to. So we learned from our faculty voice that that evidence, their trust of that evidence, and the ability for them to feel confident that students would be successful was critical.

So when we looked at elements, we made sure that we put into place a training plan. And we have done that at a number of colleges. Our systemwide office supported some training outside of our TAACCCT grant work, which we leveraged to bring regional training to faulty, and we had hundreds of faculty at least show interest.

We heard their fears, we talked through their issues, we put in strategies to continue the conversations. And as we did that, we learned a few things from – directly from our faculty. They really wanted some peer opportunities to share their assessment tools and assessment strategies in Credit for Prior Learning with other peers. Not necessarily in their discipline. So we built avenues for that.

We built webinars and trainings around rubric development for Credit for Prior Learning that helped our faculty understand how to look at the assessment of evidence that would be coming outside of the learning environment, how to align that because often they were looking for the same evidence when, indeed, they didn't need to look for the same evidence. But they weren't always sure what to look for. So that peer-to-peer in coaching and training was helpful.

We did leverage external resources again through this extra money through our CAEL partner, because they were a neutral party. So they felt like they could give feedback and faculty felt like they would not have any judgment but would have a resource. So that was extremely helpful.

And then many of our colleges brought in their instructional design elements or instructional design personnel to really look at competencies and the levels of expectation they had around the taxonomy of measurable competencies not measuring experience. So that was really what we found as best practices in our faculty training.

So I'd like to show just a few of these websites and what came out as promising practices for student communication also became a very important piece. So I am going to switch over to share my screen and I will just take you – these will all be in the PowerPoint presentation.

Here is one particular college. This college is one of the 16 colleges. They decided that they wanted to make something that was more visual to communicate to student and less words. Because students needed to make a quick decision. So they built a website that allowed students to sort of quickly sort if they were looking for things that they've done in their work. Maybe they're military or what exams are possible. So that's one way that one of our colleges, Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College, took that on.

The second one I'll show you is Northeast Wisconsin Technical College. Again, remember, our goal was simple, speedy and seamless for our customer. So we did something very similar and are working to capture the stories and voices of our students that can speak to other students and again did a similar thing as we try to architect out what the options were for our students.

But I think, most importantly, we gave sort of four simple steps that we would want a student to do. And it's been very successful, and I'll show you some more of that data as we get deeper in the presentation.

And then the last one I will show you is Southwest Technical College, who actually took their program page – this happens to be welding, one of our programs – and they actually have a Prior Learning tab. So if you're thinking about welding, you can sort of see at a glance that there are opportunities for Prior Learning and what they are and in what courses.

So I think those were three demonstrations of how our colleges took on the role of communicating more efficiently to our students. OK. So I'm going to go back to my presentation.

And so as we thought about the other thing – just like I've shared with you in the past, we were trying to think forward, so we knew that there was some best practices in this substantive change. We saw Credit for Prior Learning as a change opportunity, so we leveraged our state policy, which was existing, and brought our local colleges to interpret that policy and put practices in place.

We built a statewide pricing framework. Our presidents got together and signed an MOU that said we will not compete on price. We will set a statewide price. That was major work but helps all of us move forward collectively as opposed to independently. We leveraged marketing that we could all use and clearly communicate.

We used each other as peer evaluators of web information and our students as well. We defined our processes clearly and then we provided opportunities to track data. We knew that, often, Credit for Prior Learning is measured at the exit, meaning those who gain Credit for Prior Learning are what we measure. What we aren't measuring is where might we be losing those students and what might we do about that. It's more important data to have those leading indicators.

So this is an example of a very – it looks complex, I'm sorry, on the screen, but it is a very simple way for us to look at some critical leading elements. In the top left-hand corner, you'll see we watched – started watching web hits, and we could see over time more and more students hitting our website in this particular college at certain points in the year. So it gave us some opportunities for marketing.

We also looked at where successes have been happening, both in the courses and in the comparisons of credits. And we can see the bar graph showing by semester they continue to go up. We are making process.

We're tracking how many tools we have available to students and how many faculty have received training. So all of those are critical to front-end pieces to know that the work we're doing is hopefully making a difference or is a promising practice.

And, last, I'll leave you with our early data. Again, we were starting in 2012. We wrapped up our project 2015. So what do we know about the data from our state? We did all the work I just talked about, but as you can see, we – our data here is from a system perspective. And six years after our TAACCCT 2 grant was implemented, we see an increase of 283 more students receiving Credit for Prior Learning while at the same time you'll notice a drop in headcount of over 16,000.

So we are making progress. So that's the story of what we've done in Credit for Prior Learning in the state of Wisconsin. I'm going to turn it back over to Cheryl.

MS. MARTIN: Or actually to Erin because Erin is going – has some questions.

MS. BERG: All right. We have one question that came in asking if there was any specific work for this and students who are in the military or are leaving the military service.

MS. KAMPS: So that is a great question. I would say yes there was. We didn't really have a lot of progress, at least at the round 2 timeframe. However, as we've moved through, Wisconsin then did have a round 3 TAACCCT grant that had all 16 colleges and a round 4th TAACCCT grant that also had all 16 colleges.

So we took the work of round 2 and round 3 picked it up. And so they advanced military work. So indeed we have been making more progress in our military efforts. As we speak, I was at a meeting yesterday in Madison where we talked specifically about Credit for Prior Learning and our veteran population.

And we are certainly looking at more deliberate ways to look at the training that our military personnel are bringing with them from their experience and trying to more specifically align it to programs. There are certainly programs we see, at least in Wisconsin, a higher density of military personnel, so we believe that's where we're going to continue to do work.

But I wish we would've had more in this grant but I think we laid the framework and foundation for military. So we continue to explore that through our individual colleges but collective, with our individual colleges and the system office.

MS. BERG: Thanks, Anne. Another question is it seems as though having the colleges interpret the policy would have a huge impact on buy-in. How did you get that to happen and did the fact that your system is made up of individual colleges, did that add to the difficulty?

MS. KAMPS: Yes. It did add to the difficulty. So the advantage we had is we did, in Wisconsin, have a very broad Credit for Prior Learning polity, but it wasn't very explicit on how colleges were to interpret the work. So I would say what the turning point may have happened for us is, again, I talked a little bit, we were moving into an outcomes-based funding model in our Wisconsin Technical College System.

Credit for Prior Learning was one of the discussed elements that may come into play as a measure. And so we just leveraged that opportunity. It just appeared and so we took it. And really through the work of the mapping, each college doing those webinar series and mapping their processes helped them understand, did their policy locally really address what they wanted to have happen? Could they actually use data and see what was going on?

So that did help but it was definitely difficult when we're 16 individual entities. So we used those communities of practice and the buy-in of our leaders. We did a separate – or we did a separate in-person training for our senior and executive leaders at colleges essentially provost or VPs for learning. And we had about 90 percent of our colleges send their leaders, and we worked from that set of individuals and the policy to bring it back to the individual organization. So it did take a fair amount of the years in our TAACCCT grant to get there.

MS. BERG: Thank you, Anne. Let me see if there's – (inaudible) – question, is there links to the prior learning assessment work in the field guide? Is there a link that we can provide for that?

MS. KAMPS: There is a link in the field guide. We did put everything there. So for sure the welding PLA tool that we provided was there. We have access to the webinars that we built and examples of the process maps. And on the very last slide of my presentation is a leadership guide that was put together by the OC CRL out of Chicago on the leadership side of it because it was such a critical piece.

MS. BERG: Thank you. And one last question. Do the students have to pay a fee for the credits?

MS. KAMPS: That was what our presidents negotiated at the MOU. They don't pay for the credits because that would be selling credits. So we have a flat fee that our state has aligned. So for a standardized exam, you pay $50, credit agnostic. And for a demonstration, you would pay $90. That's what our state – so all 16 colleges use that same framework of pricing.

MS. BERG: Great. Thank you very much. Cheryl, did you have anything else you wanted to add?

MS. MARTIN: No. I think we're good. Thank you, both of you. So I think we're ready to move onto Matt's presentation. And if you think about a question that you have for Anne, you can still put them in the chat box and we'll have a little bit more time at the end for questions for both.

But let's go ahead and turn it over to Matt.

MATTHEW CLOUD: Well, thank you. I'm glad to be talking with you, and Anne, I'm going to use that comment you made about a flat fee so we're not selling credit on PLA and see how that works here in Indiana. I love that comment.

So here we go. In Indiana, we have a large – it's not a consortium. We're actually one college across the state with 26 locations where we're teaching IT at 20 – we have 19 campuses is what we call them, depending upon the size and population. But you can see this nice polka dotted map here of where our campuses and sites are located throughout the state.

Anywhere you see the green and orange or yellow are basically where we have been affected by this TAACCCT grant over the past four years. So what we did with this TAACCCT grant for us, because we're not a consortium but singly accredited, we're looked at as one college, which limited the amount of funds we had. So we looked at it a little bit differently.

We did have right degree programs within the school of IT. We focused on making sure everybody had the supplies and equipment they needed. We worked on the online virtual data center to make that more extensive. We actually had over 22,000 students in the last four years in these programs, so that was a – actually, fairly low-cost at the end, of what it cost us to do.

The 19 data centers now, we actually have it at 26, but this helped fund 19 of those. Creating state and local boards as well as a statewide competition. The statewide competition what is what I'm going to really focus on for this particular webinar. It's kind of a unique and interesting aspect of it that we didn't expect to see. But I'll talk a little bit about the others.

First of all, there's the Model to Start, which doesn't look like it's going to show the other part of this for whatever reason. Maybe it will with this link there. OK. There we go. So within this model, we have a lot of different jobs that can come out of this same type of work. And as they progress in their work, they may switch to different careers, from starting out as IT support, becoming a supervisor then becoming a manager. Or they might go into something completely different.

So mapping this out is a little bit more interesting you might say than maybe a typical way of mapping out a program. But they're working even lockpicking at the basic end of cyber security to this student here actually has palsy. We worked very well to make sure that we could reach all students.

And we wanted to make sure that everything laddered to industry. So one of the things that was key in this, if – I guess I can go back to that real quick over here, is this beginning start. Making sure that the first course aligned really well and could help them advance throughout it.

We have 12 different degrees within those eight programs, between associates of applied science and or an applied science. And there's a difference between the number of credits that they have there. The technical certificate is the first year of the Associate of Applied Science and their certificate programs, which are 16 to 29 credit hours, which are – technically could be done in a semester or two, but depending upon what it is, it might be more.

So we really also focused on the industry certification. So when you come over to this slide here, you can see that – it's kind of hard to see on here, but there's over 40 industry certifications which change over time. But they directly relate to the over 85 courses that we have. So students could get credit for it or maybe they have, when they come in through that PLA type of arrangement or they can get those certifications for industry.

So this blue one right here is actually the – (inaudible) – is one of our first courses that students have to take. And it doesn't matter if they're doing theoretical computer science or they're going to be doing basic IT support. Everybody needs to know how to fix that basic computer.

So we started out with the first semester – actually, it took us a couple of years to get here, to having the first semester the same across all eight programs so that we could make sure that it was simple for students to follow and go through. And then the second semester actually splits into two ways. That's something that happened finally this year. And then at the third and fourth semester, they could actually have 100 different exit points depending upon where they're going.

And this is one of the data centers that we have out there, but this is not only for it to look good but also for them to have the practical experience working with raised floors and have that success and confidence in working with the same thing they're going to be working with in industry.

They were very independent. We brought in industry and there was a lot of things that we learned about what they wanted versus what we wanted. And this IT challenge was something that was two lines in our grant that nobody really knew what it was. The first year, our first FPO said, OK, we can't do this because you can't do food; right?

I think if you went to the first TAACCCT conference, we got like something half the size of a TicTac and water, right? Because food is always a big thing, as well as, what do they get as far as prizes? None of that can be funded by the Department of Labor. So we thought about it, made it work. We had a new FPO. He allowed it.

Then I had new administration here at Ivy Tech. We said, oh, well maybe we'll do it. Maybe we won't. Finally, by year three, we were able to do it because I said, oh, this is a requirement of the TAACCCT grant. And we were limited to $10,000. So we used that to pay for the travel expenses for these students coming from all over the state to come to our hotel. We have our own hotel where we do hospitality and run this challenge that we did.

So the first year is all based upon first semester courses. Talking with industry. They're actually being the judges. And we had 105 students attending that and participating. It was a great fun. Everyone enjoyed it. They were ready to start again the next month, except for maybe me. I was not really ready to do that the next month yet.

But the interesting thing that came out of it was that what they thought students could do or should be doing at a competition wasn't necessarily what we were teaching. And so even though we've done all this work to really get things in line, there was this missing last step. So it went around again to 2018 and it's not necessarily all that exciting to watch students in an IT challenge unless you know what they're doing there.

There – the one exciting one is where they're building computers as fast as they can. That one gets a little crazy. But they're working together even to do well. In fact, there was so much good things that our administration saw. Not only did they say, oh, wow. We'll actually pay for the hotel usage that you have here. We're going to give the students – each of the gold medal winners $3,000 scholarships.

And that came about because we had a career fair that we added to it. How do we make sure we get these students going? The previous year in 2017 we had not had ever anywhere in the state an IT career fair for our students which, to me, was just kind of unbelievable. But this actually pushed it together where we could do them at the same time. That went fantastic. We only had 40 employers because that's all we could fit in here.

That's where we were supposed to speak with our – we had a conference at the same time to bring in more employers and more partners to help fund what was happening. And so on top of this $25,000 in prizes, $24,000 scholarships, there was actually another almost $50,000 in travel expenses for students to attend.

We had about 150 students competing but over 300 students attending this networking career fair. And each of those were looking to hire – a few of them 10s but several of them wanting to hire thousands. Companies like Infosys coming back to the U.S. from India for – even though they're an India-based company.

They've now bought the west side of the former Indianapolis Airport and are turning that into what they call the Indiana Taj Mahal to hire 3,000 computer science AI-based students. Not even just basic. High-level is what they're looking for. GEICO called me a week before this competition through their intermediaries that do their hiring thing. They want to hire 450 people to build a new data center in Indianapolis and they want to hire our students to do that.

So we had to start looking at, OK, well, one of the things we've got to change it, you can't limit it on a bachelor's degree. It has to also have an associate's. Those kind of things. And so what happens, these students are performing in front of the employers, having their – (inaudible) – aspects of a normal career fair just for people to kind of mill around.

But we have a conference going on as well where they can hear from some of the best speakers in the world on IT. And so it turned out to be this really interesting setup. I thought it was interesting from when I gave a small part of this in our discussion in Tampa a couple weeks ago, that one of my co-presenters out of Tennessee, Elizabeth, she picked up on that we had our own hotels. Our college president asked me – gave me a call Saturday wanting to set up that program there. So you never know where that's all going to go.

But because we have these different ways to integrate in these different programs in a fun, exciting, engaging way, everybody really enjoys it and it really brings people together in a way we just really didn't expect. This is part of the conference. So we set 75 people into this room up in our penthouse.

Well, this is a guy in charge from Cisco over North and South America giving a presentation there to students, high school students involved as well, and the final kind of shot of the students that were left on the final day there doing – and faculty for the presentation of what they were able to get.

What happened the next day, one of the employers that were there – one of the employer partners was the National Guard. We have a special training set up with the National Guard that started this semester which is – they can do 24/7 cybersecurity training, get that degree in 11 months, and have a job lined up as a reserve within with a nice $20,000 bonus plus your pick of jobs with the FBI, NSA, that kind of work, because we're also tied in with them.

But what happened is they were there and said, hey, can you do this next week for our job fair? And we politely said we would love to do this in a few months maybe; right? Because it does take quite a bit to set it up. And we put this work into the SkillsCommons work there in the field guide, what they have so that you can get a taste of how you can get this started. What are the different metrics that we're using to make that happen?

One of the things that we're looking at for this coming year also in line with where the Department of Labor is going with apprenticeships is, could this become the IT apprenticeship challenge? We added this past year visual communications which is now a part of the school of IT. But they came in smoothly and seamlessly, and instead of it being a fight, it actually became a good conversation with adding that program to our school, which, when I came on board and started at our college, it was difficult getting campuses to work together and programs to work and people across different areas.

Everybody was very siloed. And this has been a great process to help them work together. And one of the things that has also come out of that is that now we're looking at different ways – we've got the Maskada (ph) cybersecurity program going. But we also have Monday, Wednesday cohorts, Tuesday, Thursday cohorts, leaving Fridays open for them to do apprenticeship programs, work three days, go to school two days, work in the evening. And it's getting all these great conversations.

OK. And so yeah. There was an excited faculty member who was giving us a lot of doubts at the beginning but loved it at the end. And it's got time expired there. I thought that was appropriate. As well as one of the shots of students getting their checks from the EEC council, actually, for ethical hacking was what they were working on there.

So I have a few questions. Is there data available on demographic representation for people hired on the spot? I don't know that we have demographics on that particularly, but that's possible. We have a very wide range of students at our college. Thanks. And I think Erin's going to pick up the rest there.

MS. BERG: Sure. Got to make sure I'm doing my job here. We have a question that came in asking that staying up-to-date for the IT industry is not an easy feat. How do you suggest colleges become agile enough to stay relevant to industry?

MR. CLOUD: OK. So the biggest challenge there – there were a lot of takeaways from the TAACCCT grant. I just wanted to try to focus on one that we hadn't before. But that was a major one as well, is getting the faculty engaged with industry and vice versa. So I started with – I had my own software company for 14 years. I'd been teaching as an adjunct in other ways for many years. I hope to finally retire. All I'm doing is full-time faculty at some point.

The idea was actually getting them together, having lunch to sit down and talk about what the issues are. And so that was really the challenge. So the first two years, I did that at the state level. Showed them how to do that locally, knocking on doors if needed. And now the difficulty after doing that for four years is having enough people to really handle that.

So in Indianapolis, we've hired a person to focus on just those internship and job relationships and it's actually built, in the past year, into a couple different positions. And different groups have moved – like the – I'm going to mess up the name I'm sure. But it's women in IT in Indiana and they have their office now in Indianapolis working to hire women in particular at that location. So we've got I think three people now focused just on that aspect there.

And that's how we keep that going between them. We've had IBM, Cisco. We go to their partnership conferences. They come to ours. I was on the phone yesterday with Amazon. Finally, we've got that integrated into our curriculum. We're working not just within our college but with other colleges across the nation and globally. We have some partnerships with London and Australia. It's really where can we get that best conversation going?

MS. BERG: Thanks, Matt. Was the IT challenge at the end of the first semester or was it some other time? And how did you decide when to offer it?

MR. CLOUD: So it was a very democratic process where we asked the faculty, the chairs across the state. We had at the time 14 regions is how it was divided at that time. And so they had a vote for each one of those to decide what worked best. We found out actually that week after Easter tends to work really well.

We looked at – early in the semester, they don't know enough. We wanted to make sure that it was something that first semester students could get involved with. And the reason being is one of the metrics that's not in the TAACCCT report that we added to ours is that we have over 90 percent employed. Not necessarily do all of those have a credential. In fact, a large percentage don't have a credential yet but they stayed in college and continued to ladder up because of the skills that we're offering.

And so we do it in the last part of the second semester but before they get to finals, a few weeks before finals.

MS. BERG: Great. And then are you continuing the IT challenges and the career fairs now that the grant is ending or has ended?

MR. CLOUD: So it has here for this year. In fact, it was not funded by the grant other than the director that we hired out of it, Doug from Cincinnati with Transform Consulting. He did help with some of the pre-work. But the actual event itself was all funded by businesses. And we plan for that to continue for the spring.

MS. BERG: OK. Great. I think that's it for our questions for you, so I'm going to turn it back over to Cheryl to help us wrap things up. Cheryl?

MS. MARTIN: All right. Thank you, Erin, thank you Matthew, and thank you, Anne. I'm always impressed with how much people can cram into one webinar. But then when I stop to think, I think, yeah. But then how much they did to make these grants happen. So thank you so much for sharing the cliff notes version of some of the things that you did. That's great.

There are – as I mentioned, this is all information – well, not all exactly, but the webinars you can find here on WorkforceGPS. But it's related to information that you can find on SkillsCommons and there's a number of different ways to connect and to continue connecting with the tax grantees through SkillsCommons, whether it's the social media, the base camp, MERLOT Voices or the connect center there. And those links are there for you to use.

If you are – SkillsCommons is a website that has been initially funded by the Department of Labor but it will continue on after this program is over. And you can go there and look for things that you're interested in finding, whether it's this kind of information in the field guide or curriculum, which we didn't really talk a lot about today. But it's all there.

I would encourage you, when you go to SkillsCommons, to check out the showcases. You'll see a tab that says showcases and I think there's about nine of them right now. There's one on apprenticeship. There's some on workforce development kinds of level learning. There's one called the Ohio Manufacturing Showcase which is an – actually an example of the Ohio Manufacturing Association, who put together a collection of the resources that are just things that relate to manufacturing.

And anybody else can use that as well. It's just an example. And SkillsCommons folks can also work with other folks to build those or that kind of thing. So anyway, we – and if you're having questions and you can't find what you're looking for, then support@skillscommons.org is your friend.

Don't forget that there are a few more webinars or one more webinar in this series now. There may be some other webinars that we'll be doing a little bit later, maybe in early 2019, that relate to some of the evaluations that have – that are being developed right now. We'll – stay tuned for that. We'll be putting that out if we can.

But meanwhile, we've got one more next week. But a lot of recordings of these as well. There's just so much rich information here. We really appreciate you joining us today and hope that you got something valuable out of this. Because we have no more questions at this point and we'll wrap it up for today.

(END)