CREDLENS

Building an Evidence Base for a Non-Traditional Education Model

"Calbright's mission is simple and urgent: expand economic mobility for working-age adults. But to truly serve our students, we must measure what matters in their lives. We are building a new evidence base — one that tracks skills, jobs, wage growth, and long-term career advancement. By partnering across the workforce ecosystem, we are creating innovative benchmarks and longitudinal data that validate what matters most: whether our students secure meaningful employment, grow in their careers, and achieve lasting economic mobility."

Ajita Talwalker Menon, President and CEO, Calbright College

Developing New Standards for Outcomes Reporting

Calbright College is California's only statewide, fully online community college. Designed to serve working-age adults through a tuition-free, flexibly-paced Competency-Based Education (CBE) model, Calbright provides pathways to careers in high-growth industries like information technology, business and healthcare. While this holistic model removes barriers for students, it can be challenging to align data with traditional systems of record to report on outcomes. To supplement the impact stories from alumni surveys with data-informed insights, Calbright partnered with CredLens to enhance its access to longitudinal and reliable outcomes tracking.

"If it wasn't for the program being free, and if it wasn't for the flexibility to raise my children, I couldn't do this. I really enjoy the opportunities to huddle and study with friends I've never met in person. Calbright has a very strong community."

Luana, Sunnyvale, CRM Platform Administration Program

CALBRIGHT COLLEGE

- **Location:** California statewide
- **Type:** Public, California Community Colleges
- **Mission:** Increasing economic mobility for working-age adults through flexible, non-degree credentials.
- **Enrollment:** Approximately 6,500 students
- **Student Population:** Nearly 74% of students identify as people of color. 94% are 25+ years old; median age is late 30s.
- **Model:** Industry-aligned Competency-Based Education allowing for 52-week-a-year enrollment and flexibly-paced programming
- **Programs:** Defensive Cybersecurity, Data Analytics, IT Support, Network+, CRM Administration, Project Management, HR Learning & Development, HR Talent Acquisition, Medical Coding, Community Health Worker, and more...

www.calbright.edu

CHALLENGE

Addressing Structural Data Gaps

"We are on a quest to effectively measure how Calbright delivers increased economic mobility for students. This means having access to reliable data that captures our students finishing at their own pace, tracks upward mobility in wages and jobs over time, and complements our own alumni research."

Binh Thuy Do, VP of Research and Development, Calbright College

Calbright's model is designed to remove barriers for students, but those same innovations create challenges for traditional data tracking. The College identified several structural hurdles that limit visibility into student success:

+ **The Limitations of Traditional Term-Based Reporting:** Standard state reporting is built around semesters and cohorts. Calbright's CBE model allows students to finish programs on their own timelines. This means completers enter the workforce 52 weeks a year, making it difficult to "fit" them into traditional annual reporting cycles.
+ **The Administrative Data Lag:** State-level graduate data typically involves a critical time lag for reportable data. For an institution issuing market-aligned certificates, Calbright needs more timely outcome data to assess its impact or make program refinements.
+ **The Wage Data Gap:** Because Calbright is non-credit and tuition-free for California residents, students do not currently report wage data (through FAFSA or other means) — removing the ability to link student records with federal and state employment databases. Consequently, Calbright lacks the "built-in" student data available to other institutions.

To address these systemic data limitations, Calbright conducts alumni surveys and focus groups but self-reported and qualitative data does not yield the timely and in-depth data needed for reporting. The College sought an independent partner to help bridge these gaps and develop a more comprehensive view of alumni success.

"Calbright gave me the platform, Calbright gave me opportunity, and Calbright gave me hope. I'm really grateful for Calbright."

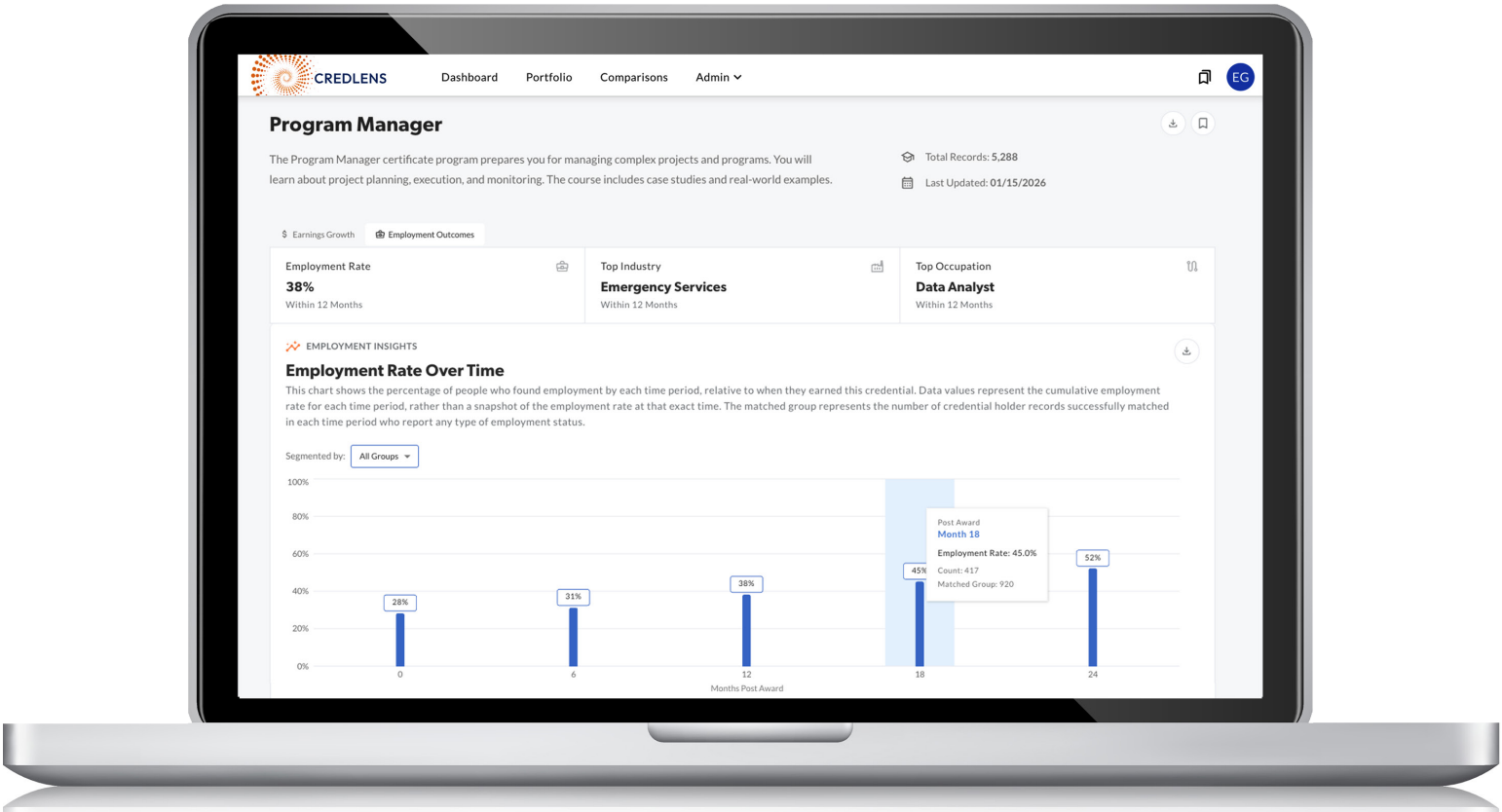
Ebenzer, Redlands; Program: Data Analysis

SOLUTION

Enhancing Longitudinal Outcomes Tracking & Analytics

Calbright partnering with CredLens to augment its internal research with longitudinal tracking of completers' job and wage progression. The partnership provides Calbright with access to data and insights that complements their alumni engagement efforts, including:

+ **Scalable Measurement:** Calbright can supplement self-reported survey data with independent evidence of employment and earnings.
+ **Longitudinal Tracking:** Calbright can track alumni employment at 6, 12, 18, and 24 months post- credential and earnings trajectory for longer time horizons after completion.



Data is representative of what the CredLens Insights Platform will share.

IMPACT

Strengthening the Evidence Base for Short-Term Credentials

> *"Measuring Calbright's impact requires a combination of qualitative insights from our alumni and independent, verifiable outcomes. By supplementing our surveys with these additional data sources, we are building a more comprehensive picture of our completers' achievements."*

Binh Thuy Do, VP of Research and Development, Calbright College

While the partnership is in its early stages, Calbright's leadership anticipates that the integration of longitudinal data sets will evolve its ability to demonstrate impact and inform program pathways and ongoing workforce development. The CredLens Insights Platform will help Calbright to:

+ **Validate the Educational Model:** Having ongoing access to quality outcomes data will provide the additional "proof points" that substantiate the value of Calbright's approach and the professional benefits for completers.
+ **Inform Program Strategy:** Integrating the real-world earning and employment outcomes for alumni enables a data-driven management of the program pathway portfolio.

Expanding Operational Capacity

An immediate benefit of the partnership is its role in streamlining the R&D team's existing workflow. Outcomes research has involved the team scouring public sources for completer data. With CredLens Insight Platform, the Calbright team is able to reduce the amount of time and manual effort previously required to collect and understand alumni outcomes. This allows the team to focus more on the high-level strategic analysis that drives program innovation and continuous improvement.

Calbright and CredLens will continue to update the case study as additional data and insights are available.

Ensuring Data Security and Privacy:

CredLens' approach relies on strict policies and systems to protect Personally Identifiable Information (PII) and ensure data confidentiality and integrity.

Click to learn more

About CredLens

CredLens is a neutral source of high-quality outcomes data for non-degree credentials, bridging the gap between issuer records and real-world results. By connecting issuer-verified records with robust outcomes data, we empower policymakers, funders, and educators to measure program impact, optimize investments, and build clearer pathways to economic mobility. Governed as a data trust, CredLens utilizes a privacy-first model to ensure the secure exchange of information.

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