

Credit for Prior Learning and PLAR: Critical tools for higher education growth, student success and economic opportunity.



KnowMeQ's ArchieCPL is
transforming enrolment,
retention, and institutional
revenue.



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Funding to support this report was provided by ONCAT (Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer). The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of ONCAT or the Government of Ontario.

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As this paper will detail, Credits for Prior Learning (CPL) saves students time, money, and research has shown it enables them to be more likely to complete. However, similar to other dated aspects of systems and structures, higher education has mostly been fairly limited in approach and operations associated with CPL. By and large, institutions are primarily doing CPL for exams/tests and recognition of external certifications, with a few institutions employing credit by portfolio options for students.

To appropriately recognize, honour, and credit students their knowledge, skills, and abilities acquired prior to their academic journey with an institution, academic leaders need to broaden their offerings and conceptualizations of what CPL is to properly recognize the various forms of prior learning someone may possess and be able to demonstrate. Doing so will realize benefits for students, but institutions also benefit from further enabling student success. Students who receive CPL credit are more likely to take more credits at the awarding institution than students who did not earn CPL. This finding over years of research (Klein-Collins et al., 2020; CAEL 2024) dispels the myth that CPL credit gives away profit the institution would have otherwise seen; it is, in fact, an early investment that the student pays back by taking more credit and adding to the institution's completion statistics.

Beyond students, institutional leaders can see benefits of increased partnerships or warmer reception of graduates for employers and partners. Organizations may be more likely to partner if they see validation of their training programs or employee competency via CPL recognition. Additionally, organizations and employers may appreciate a faster completion time to degree for students via CPL pathways compared to traditional routes. CPL can truly be a win-win for all parties involved, especially when done right.

A real challenge to elevating CPL practices are the requisite resources. Personalized attention to reviewing student content (particularly portfolio approaches), as well as staying on top of external materials or credentials reviewed for credit, can be taxing on institutional employees. Being able to leverage technology for document review, outcome or competency alignment, and comparison with course content can transform CPL efforts from being a cost center to a new-found revenue stream for the institution. What is great about this paper is that it provides more detail and information about these challenges, opportunities, and more.

If you know about CPL and want to better understand what other institutions are doing to be successful, read on. If you aren't as familiar with CPL but are curious to explore efforts to elevate institutional practices to increase student success and institutional revenue, this paper can also meet your needs.

Expanding on existing CPL-related research with informational interviews and institutional examples of practice, this paper offers an informative and essential message for institutions of higher education, students, and employers to consider in common goals around achievement and success.

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In today's rapidly evolving educational landscape, postsecondary institutions face unprecedented challenges and must reimagine recruitment and retention models to survive. Declining enrollment, shifting public perceptions of the value of a college degree, and tightening immigration policies are all converging to exert extreme pressure and reshape the higher education ecosystem in the U.S., and Canada.

According to a recent Pew Research Center survey, **49 per cent of Americans believe a college degree is less important for securing a well-paying job now than it was 20 years ago**¹. This emerging attitude has surfaced at a time when demographic shifts have resulted in declining college-age populations² that are forecasted to result in measurable drops in enrolment³.

Put simply, there are fewer traditionally aged college students and a diminished perceived value in institutional accreditation.

There is also the matter of greater student mobility. Research from the Washington-based Centre for Higher Education Policy and Practice (CHEPP) found that nearly two out of five students transfer institutions within six years of entering college, and 45 per cent of those students transfer twice. CHEPP's research also found that transfer students lose about 43 per cent of previously earned credits, equivalent to roughly one semester's worth. This credit loss often deters students from pursuing transfer opportunities or continuing their education altogether. Although 80 per cent of community college students express an intention to transfer, only 33 per cent ultimately do so - posing challenges for retention and contributing to declining overall student numbers.

Meanwhile, new restrictions on foreign study permits will drastically reduce the influx of international students – once seen as a financial lifeline. In Canada, the government's new limits on foreign study permits have disrupted previously stable international recruitment channels, a development that led David Agnew, President of Seneca Polytechnic in Toronto to assert that the “The financial situation of the system is frankly precarious”.⁴

Against this backdrop, Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) emerges as a strategic lever - one capable of addressing multiple challenges simultaneously. These credits, awarded for knowledge acquired outside traditional academic settings through work, military, volunteer experiences, or prior courses completed elsewhere, embody an equitable recognition of diverse pathways to learning.

They serve as a bridge, facilitating more flexible, personalized educational pathways while reducing time-to-completion and associated costs, factors increasingly important to today's learners.

¹ Pew Research Center *Is College Worth It? May 2024*

² <https://angusreid.org/birth-rate-crisis-child-care/>

³ Forbes - <https://www.forbes.com/sites/michaeltietzel/2024/12/11/as-2025s-demographic-cliff-looms-how-far-will-college-enrollment-fall/>

⁴ Globe and Mail - <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-colleges-prepare-for-revenue-declines-owing-to-ottawas-cuts-to> October 2024

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Research conducted by the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) underscores the transformative potential of CPL. Its studies indicate that streamlining access to CPL can increase degree completion rates by up to 17 per cent. The impact is especially significant for historically underserved groups including low-income students, students of colour, immigrants, and adult learners⁵. This not only benefits individuals but also bolsters institutional retention and success metrics, positively influencing revenue streams.

Reconceptualizing prior learning recognition offers a strategic advantage by validating real-world skills and experiences. This enables institutions to present themselves as inclusive, adaptable, and responsive to the needs of non-traditional and mature learners. Such recognition is especially vital in a global landscape where technological disruption and geopolitical pressures are accelerating job displacement, demanding large-scale reskilling and upskilling to meet the evolving labour needs of modern economies.

Postsecondary institutions with responsive CPL processes can help facilitate this transition.

However, leveraging prior learning credits effectively requires a deliberate and systemic approach. It demands investment in robust assessment frameworks, faculty development, and stakeholder engagement to ensure that prior learning is accurately recognized and valued.

Institutions that lead in this domain will not only improve graduation rates and student satisfaction but also differentiate themselves in a competitive market to create new revenue streams.

⁵ CAEL - THE NATIONAL LANDSCAPE OF CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING: EFFECTIVE STATE AND SYSTEM POLICIES FOR SUCCESS AND EQUITY

While Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) and Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) are often used interchangeably, this white paper uses the term CPL throughout for consistency.

To inform the findings, we conducted a review of relevant literature from the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) and the Centre for Higher Education Policy and Practice (CHEPP). We also conducted interviews with CPL leaders from postsecondary institutions in the U.S. and Canada, including:



Western Governors University (Utah, USA)



National University (California, USA)



SUNY Empire State College (New York, USA)



Fleming College (Ontario, Canada)



Mohawk College (Ontario, Canada)



Conestoga College (Ontario, Canada)

Each interview lasted between 45 and 60 minutes and explored topics such as CPL processes and frameworks, integration into institutional strategy, streamlining efforts, and the role of innovation and technology in enhancing CPL delivery.

At its core, CPL is founded on the principle of helping learners – traditional and mature students – bypass redundant coursework, accelerate their path to degree, diploma, or certification completion, and ultimately increase their likelihood of persistence and graduation.

This includes aiding in the transfer of previously earned credits, while also recognizing that academic success does not necessarily begin and end in the classroom. Instead, it acknowledges that life experiences, professional training, and volunteer work often impart competencies equivalent to formal education.

At the same time, higher education institutions benefit from enhanced student retention, a diversified revenue base, and strengthened partnerships with industry, all of which are crucial in a competitive and ever-changing landscape.

In San Diego, National University’s approach to CPL integration exemplifies a forward-thinking model that emphasizes both proactive and student-initiated credit recognition.

Under its framework, students have two distinct routes to CPL.

Proactive articulation agreements with prominent organizations, such as Southwest Airlines and the San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance among others, allow employees who have completed specialized training programs to automatically receive academic credit for their achievements.

According to Cindi Robinson, credit for prior learning director at National University, these established pathways enable institutions to efficiently translate external experiences into academic progress. The university’s data indicate that approximately 60 to 70 per cent of CPL-awarded students benefit from these pre-arranged agreements, underscoring the efficacy of integrating formal industrial partnerships into the academic strategy.

The other route is a student-initiated model that requires individuals to submit evidence of their prior learning for faculty review. Although this pathway can be more time-intensive with evaluations potentially taking several weeks, the process ensures that even those without formal articulation agreements have an avenue to claim credit for their acquired skills.

This dual-model approach not only expands access to higher education for diverse student populations but also builds a robust pipeline that drives enrollment.

National University has positioned CPL as a strategic tool to improve retention and graduation rates. The institution’s success in “co-creating articulation pathways,” as noted by Susan Zukowski, vice president professional & continuing education, demonstrates a tangible alignment between CPL and broader enrollment strategies that address both academic and financial sustainability.

continued

In Utah, Western Governors University (WGU) provides another compelling case study in CPL integration.

With an institutional focus on student outcomes that are measured through completion, equity, and return on investment for the student, WGU has adopted a sophisticated CPL model that recognizes a broad range of sources for credit application including military training, professional certifications, and other qualifications earned by completing online courses offered through alternative credit providers or non-traditional education platforms.

Nathan Pesavento, director of credential evaluation at WGU, explains that CPL “acknowledges learners’ prior achievements to ensure that students begin their academic journey on the most appropriate footing.”

WGU’s CPL integration has had a demonstrable impact on the institution’s scale and reach. The university’s streamlined credit transfer mechanisms have culminated in the award of approximately 4.5 million competency units, effectively translating to roughly 1.3 million courses satisfied through transfer or articulation supercharging student retention. In fact, CPL is a significant driver of this outcome. A report by the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education found that CPL students earn, on average, 17.6 more credits than non-CPL students—highlighting CPL’s pivotal role in student progress.⁶

This massive scale not only highlights the technical sophistication of WGU’s CPL system but also reinforces the role of CPL in driving student success and institutional competitiveness.

Kacey Thorne, senior director of academic strategic initiatives, believes that WGU and the broader sector have done a good job applying CPL to award credits where external course competencies match internal courses, while also recognizing verifiable and industry certifications that have market value.

However, she feels there remains a lot of potential to evolve processes to capture credits for prior experience saying, “people have a lifetime of lived experience outside of traditional learning environments that we need to be able to recognize.”

In Canada, Ontario’s Fleming College has made significant commitments to expanding CPL in recognition of the fact that it both supports academic outcomes for learners and creates new revenue streams.

In Ontario, public colleges benefit from government funding that is explicitly allocated for CPL. Bailey Robinson, registrar at Fleming College, emphasizes that CPL is “certainly seen as a revenue generator.”

At Fleming, the adoption of technology and artificial intelligence (AI) in particular has been instrumental in drastically expanding the basket of potential courses an applicant qualifies for. Since launching FastPass in November 2024, the number of unique courses recommended has surpassed 5,000 - a staggering 10,000 per cent increase compared to before AI was implemented to augment Fleming’s CPL program.

⁶ Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education - *Recognizing Learning In The 21st Century*.

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It has also had a profound impact on reducing time spent per applicant while increasing the size of the candidate pool. According to Robinson “We are able to go start to finish on a CPL application in a matter of days instead of weeks, and AI has proven particularly effective at surfacing candidates who might otherwise have been overlooked.” By synthesizing large volumes of applicant data, AI uncovers transferable skills and competencies, offering tailored, evidence-based credit recommendations that support decision-making by both students and college staff.

Beyond internal efficiencies, CPL- powered by AI - is now central to Fleming’s recruitment strategy. For mid-career professionals, FastPass provides rapid insight into credit eligibility and projected time-to-completion, removing barriers to re-entry and accelerating pathways to enrollment. Importantly, FastPass also calculates revenue earned by applicant fees that are retained at Fleming to help it understand the impact of CPL on the institutions profitability, a key performance indicator that too many institutions don’t otherwise track.

These developments at Fleming have obvious implications for driving further enrollment. As we’ve learned from the CAEL research, students who accumulate more credits are more likely to pursue education than those who don’t; and those individuals also have higher graduation increasing retention.

These examples demonstrate that when CPL is thoughtfully embedded into the fabric of an institution, it not only enhances academic equity but positions the institution to thrive in a competitive and rapidly evolving landscape.

CPL Evaluation Processes and Frameworks

The evaluation process, the heart of any CPL program, varies among institutions and reflects unique philosophies and priorities.

While some schools are embracing technology to streamline assessments and enhance efficiency, others emphasize the importance of human touch and individualized review.

One institution can lay claim to a near-half-century head start.

SUNY Empire State College in New York, founded in 1971, was explicitly created to serve non-traditional students with non-traditional programs.

As Tom McElroy, executive director of prior learning, SUNY Empire State University explains, the College's early emphasis on highly individualized degrees has adapted to meet changing student needs and a more competitive landscape. While roughly half of SUNY Empire students still pursue customized learning pathways, the other half now opt for pre-defined, more structured curriculums. Yet, CPL remains a crucial element for both.

SUNY Empire's CPL offerings are twofold. First, professional learning evaluations are conducted by faculty teams, led by McElroy's office, to assess workplace training, certifications, and military service, much like ACE evaluations. These assessments assign credit values and equivalencies that, once completed, can be used by any eligible student across degree programs.

For example, the New York State substance and alcohol abuse counseling credential frequently fulfills requirements in the Bachelor of Science in Addiction Studies, but many students also apply those credits as core components of related counseling or human services majors, or as electives in other degrees. The same flexibility applies to credentials from police training, fire service, corrections, and other fields: they can satisfy program requirements where appropriate or count toward general electives, all under the guidance of faculty advisors.

Separately, SUNY Empire offers a portfolio evaluation process. This individualized assessment requires students to submit detailed portfolios demonstrating college-level learning acquired through experience. These portfolios include reflections, documentation, and academic alignment, and are reviewed by subject matter experts to ensure learning outcomes meet institutional standards.

By maintaining both pre-evaluated and portfolio-based CPL pathways, SUNY Empire offers flexibility while upholding academic rigor. As McElroy notes, the institution continues to explore technology integration to enhance its advisement and evaluation processes without compromising its human-centered approach.

Similarly, Conestoga College in Kitchener, Ontario follows a student-initiated CPL model that college administrators refer to as "passive". Once a student steps forward, the institution aims to complete application reviews within two weeks.

CPL Evaluation Processes and Frameworks

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For credit transfers, students submit transcripts and course outlines, which are reviewed by credit transfer officers to ensure completeness and relevance. At which point the chair or subject matter expert will review the Credit Transfer application, explains Scott Walker, executive director, registrarial services "The faculty would review it, provide a recommendation which goes back to the chair who either accepts or denies that recommendation." and the final decision is stored in the Credit Transfer database for future reference.

The process is slightly different when assessing previous experience, which is managed through a workflow initiated by the student completing an electronic form. The workflow provides the relevant information to the departments that are involved in the PLAR process including student and course information. Once the evaluation is complete, the workflow ensures that the results of the evaluation are recorded, and the student is kept informed of the status of their request.

Mohawk College in Hamilton, Ontario has a similar approach. Here students can challenge courses they feel they've got enough prior work experience or knowledge to gain a credit. Their readiness is assessed by instructors who may ask students to complete a specialized project, provide supporting documentation or write a challenge exam.

Teresa Boshier, who oversees Mohawk College's CPL program says that portfolio submissions are **"an important tool, especially for our continuing education students."**

WGU takes a notably different approach - one grounded in speed, scale, and systemization. Its CPL process is built not around passive intake or labour-intensive portfolios but on a homegrown, high-volume technology-enabled infrastructure designed to efficiently translate prior learning into academic credit.

WGU's admissions workflow prompts applicants to disclose relevant past learning—academic, military, professional, or third-party certifications. Its internal transcript-broker team then steps in, proactively retrieving the transcripts. From there, a team of subject matter experts reviews records against a database of more than 3.5 million transfer rules and over 400 formal articulation agreements.

"Every CPL decision is personal," says Nathan Pesavento, director of credential evaluation, WGU. "But we've invested in making it fast." According to Pesavento, 98 per cent of students receive an official CPL evaluation within three to four business days.

WGU's CPL model demonstrates the power of a systematized, technology-driven approach that prioritizes clarity, speed, and student experience - treating prior learning evaluation as a strategic driver, not a bureaucratic hurdle. By combining proactive transcript collection, transparent criteria, and rapid decision-making, institutions can enhance access, equity, and trust while scaling to meet the needs of today's learners.

In an era defined by shifting demographics, rising learner expectations, and economic disruption, CPL is a strategic asset. Institutions that invest in more efficient, scalable, and learner-centered CPL frameworks will be better positioned to serve diverse learners and foster workforce readiness.

A Deeper Dive on How Technology is Changing CPL at WGU and Fleming

Today lifelong learning and workforce agility are more critical than ever, which is why colleges and universities are reimagining how they recognize and accredit prior learning.

At the forefront of this transformation are institutions like WGU and Fleming College, which are leveraging technology to streamline the CPL process. The results: greater efficiency, improved student outcomes, and new opportunities for institutional revenue.

Historically, CPL has been a manual, paperwork-heavy process requiring extensive documentation and faculty review. Today, technology is reshaping that landscape.

WGU is leading the way in transforming CPL through strategic technology integration.

"We have the best transfer credential evaluation experience in the industry as far as turnaround time, which, depending on the program, used to range from 60 to 90 days without the use of technology," says Nathan Pesavento, director of credential evaluation.

This outcome stems from WGU's investment to create a mostly homegrown CPL evaluation system that combines human interaction with educational technology.

At the core of WGU's innovation is a vast and sophisticated database housing approximately 3.5 million transfer rules. This dynamic repository is continually reviewed and refined by subject matter experts to ensure each course transfer is both personalized and accurate. Such meticulous attention to detail underscores WGU's commitment to fairness and clarity - helping students understand exactly how their prior coursework applies to their degrees.

One of the most significant technological innovations is an online equivalency tool, which makes transfer information accessible through partner websites. This transparency empowers students to see how their credits will be recognized before they even apply. As Pesavento highlights, this front-end visibility removes much of the opacity that typically surrounds credit evaluation, giving students clearer insight into their academic progress and outstanding requirements.

WGU also automates transcript requests - streamlining a traditionally manual process. With student permission, the system retrieves transcripts automatically, reducing administrative burden and expediting evaluations. WGU's ambitious goal: to evaluate six to seven million credits, dramatically expanding the data available for students and removing barriers to graduation.

Tyson Heath, director of academic standards and policies, emphasised that all learning matters and WGU is committed to finding ways to ensure that students receive maximum, appropriate credit for prior learning through these streamlined processes that create certainty and maintain momentum to degree start.

Looking ahead, Pesavento envisions greater recognition of professional competencies through WGU's credits for prior experience initiative.

A Deeper Dive on How Technology is Changing CPL at WGU and Fleming

continued

Fleming College is driving innovation in CPL through its partnership with KnowMeQ and the implementation of FastPass - a white-labeled CPL platform built on KnowMeQ's ArchieCPL system. This AI-powered solution is redefining the evaluation of prior learning by enhancing efficiency, transparency, and expanding credit opportunities for students.

With an intuitive drag-and-drop interface, FastPass seamlessly connects users to Fleming's assessment portal, allowing applicants to upload resumes, transcripts, and supporting documentation with ease. Once submitted, AI algorithms analyze the material against comprehensive skill and competency taxonomies to identify relevant prior learning and potential credits. These insights are then mapped to both standardized and institution-specific learning outcomes to determine eligibility for academic credit.

Beyond credit identification, the system reveals transferable skills and recommends academic programs that align - sometimes unexpectedly - with a candidate's background, opening doors to new career and educational paths. Applicants choose which courses they want evaluated, and within minutes, administrators receive confidence scores to triage submissions. Armed with data-driven insights and an interactive evidence dashboard, staff can quickly validate credits or flag applications for additional review.

FastPass is equipped to request further evidence such as reflection essays, transcripts, reference letters, or even video submissions, and includes follow-up quiz questions aligned with course outcomes. The system colour-codes and scores submissions, detects AI-generated content, and ensures the integrity of the assessment process.

For administrators, the centralization of applicant data streamlines workflows and allows staff to shift their focus from paperwork to more impactful engagements like advising and student support. "FastPass allows us to front-end our CPL process with a minimal increase in labour costs per course review," says Bailey Robinson, registrar at Fleming College. By requiring comprehensive documentation up front, FastPass minimizes the time-consuming back-and-forth that traditionally burdens credit evaluations.

The platform also improves transparency and empowers learners by offering a clear, centralized overview of their academic progress. With insights into new credential opportunities and personalized pathways, students are better equipped to navigate lifelong learning. For administrators, confidence scores are paired with detailed rationales, helping reduce bias and enable more consistent, informed decisions.

That said, integrating AI isn't without challenges. Building trust in the technology is vital for institutional adoption. Fleming addresses this by including more subject matter experts in evaluations. This hybrid approach harnesses the power of AI while preserving expert human judgment. It's all about efficiency and playing to each strength: AI supports speed and scale, while humans drive persistence, guidance, and growth. The system ensures that staff concentrate their efforts on meaningful onboarding and student support, boosting the likelihood of learner success.

The experiences of Fleming College and WGU highlight a pivotal shift in higher education. By embracing technology in CPL, institutions aren't just increasing efficiency and improving outcomes - they're redefining how colleges generate revenue and remain competitive in an evolving educational landscape. As more institutions follow suit, the impact of technology-enabled CPL will ripple across the sector—empowering learners, meeting workforce needs, and making higher education more accessible, relevant, and sustainable for the future.

Before acknowledging the pervasive but surmountable challenges present in current CPL programs, it's imperative to call out the incredibly student-centric ethos that underpins so many of the institutions' programs.

There is an admirable goal of creating better student outcomes, and with that, focus shifts almost entirely to the student experience, how to improve it, and ensure a positive outcome that includes expediting degrees and certification to save much needed time and money.

This "if you build it, they will come" mentality is a kind of brand promise that likely fuels much goodwill between institution and learner, creating positive word of mouth that attracts more students that grows CPL enrollment organically.

And yet there exists opportunities to formalize CPL into business strategy, create well defined enrollment outcomes tied to revenue goals and measure the overall success of the program so that CPL becomes a more active component of curriculum and institutional growth.

These do not feel like mutually exclusive goals – to treat students well, and increase revenue from enrollment, but it will mean explicitly tying the two together and then measuring results to optimize CPL performance.

One of the most consistent challenges across institutions is simply making students aware of CPL opportunities. Despite the potential benefits of earning credit for existing knowledge and skills, many students remain unaware of their eligibility or the process for applying. This "awareness gap" represents a significant barrier to CPL adoption, preventing countless students from accessing a potentially life-changing pathway to higher education. "Our biggest challenge and something that we're working very hard to tackle is students not knowing CPL exists," admits Cindi Robinson, director of credit for prior learning at National University. This sentiment is echoed across the board, highlighting the need for a concerted effort to promote CPL among prospective and current students. Addressing this awareness gap requires a multi-pronged approach. Institutions need to go beyond simply listing CPL options on their websites and actively market the program through various channels, including proactive outreach, targeted advertising, and incorporating CPL information into recruitment materials and online orientations.

Another is data collection and program measurement. Some degree of this is currently taking place with institutions tracking CPL student demographics, faculty and assessors involved, etc.

However, there is a dearth of information on business outcomes tied to CPL. There should be much more rigour with respect to data capture to understand CPL's impact on the student journey. Retention and completion rates, remote versus on-campus learning, number of courses taken per student, cost of securing learners via CPL versus traditional marketing outreach – understanding measurable outcomes tied to CPL can embed it as a central priority for institutions.

Furthermore, specific revenue targets or direct revenue generation per student in CPL is not explicitly gathered. Setting revenue generation goals will enable higher educational institutions to establish a clear roadmap for sustainable growth, ensuring they allocate resources effectively and measure success against tangible benchmarks.

Ultimately, bridging the awareness gap, formalizing CPL within institutional strategy, and setting measurable revenue goals will ensure CPL programs not only enhance student success, but also contribute meaningfully to long-term institutional profitability.

continued

To improve business performance through CPL, higher educational institutions can take several key actions:

Integrate CPL into overall institutional strategy

Deliberately incorporate CPL as a core component of business strategy, including goals for enrollment growth, revenue generation, and student retention.

Position CPL as a competitive advantage

Make the process transparent, efficient, and front-ended to attract students and differentiate the institution.

Evaluate ROI and broader benefits

Quantify the return on investment for CPL by considering not only direct revenue but also increased enrollment, higher student retention, improved graduation rates, enhanced institutional competitiveness, and positive word-of-mouth marketing.

Proactively address student concerns

Use data from student inquiries and feedback to continuously improve the clarity of the process, address common confusions, and enhance the overall student experience.

Implement robust data tracking and metrics

Systematically track CPL outcomes, including the number of credits awarded, student persistence, retention rates, program completion, and overall student satisfaction.

Analyze student demographics

Collect and analyze demographic data of CPL applicants to better understand the population served and refine outreach and program strategies.

Develop clear informational resources

Create dedicated CPL landing pages, manuals, FAQs, and easily accessible information for students.

Foster faculty buy-in and training

Ensure strong support from faculty by educating them on the value of CPL, providing training on assessment methods, and making the process easy for them to administer.

continued

Form strategic industry partnerships

Collaborate with employers and industry to proactively align CPL with workforce needs, recognizing workplace training, certifications, and apprenticeships for academic credit.

Explore high-demand fields

Focus CPL expansion in areas with high workforce demand, such as early childhood education, healthcare, criminal justice, and skilled trades

Automate documentation and credit prediction

Utilize AI-supported systems for upfront documentation submission, resume/transcript analysis, and predicting credit eligibility to accelerate the initial assessment phase.

As higher education institutions navigate a rapidly evolving landscape, the path to sustained growth and student success increasingly relies on innovative strategies. Among these, CPL emerges as a transformative force, poised to reshape learning and institutional prosperity.

While implementation varies, the core principle remains consistent: recognizing and validating learning wherever it occurs empowers students and strengthens institutions in profound ways.

The beauty of CPL lies in its ability to simultaneously address two critical needs: enhancing student outcomes and driving revenue growth via increased enrolment of non-traditional learners. In an era of declining enrollment and increased scrutiny of the value of a college degree, CPL offers a compelling value proposition.

By acknowledging and awarding credit for knowledge and skills acquired outside the traditional classroom – through work experience, military service, volunteer activities, or other learning opportunities – institutions can attract a wider range of students, particularly adult learners and those with diverse backgrounds who may not have considered higher education as a viable option.

This broadened access not only benefits individual learners but also fuels institutional growth. CPL can increase overall enrollment, boost retention rates, and improve graduation rates, all of which contribute to a more sustainable revenue stream. Moreover, institutions can strategically align CPL initiatives with government funding incentives, creating a mutually beneficial cycle of support.

Furthermore, CPL is not simply a tool for attracting new students; it is a powerful mechanism for improving student success. By validating existing knowledge and skills, CPL can reduce the time to completion, minimize redundant coursework, and allow students to focus on areas where they need further development. This leads to increased student engagement, improved retention, and more timely graduation, ultimately enhancing the reputation and competitiveness of the institution.

CPL represents a fundamental shift in how we view learning – a shift that recognizes that knowledge and skills are not confined to the classroom but are acquired through a lifetime of experiences. By embracing this perspective and investing in robust CPL programs, institutions can unlock the vast potential of prior learning to transform student outcomes, drive revenue growth, and create a more equitable and prosperous future for all. The journey to this future is within our reach, and the time to embrace the transformative power of CPL is now.

Let's Talk:

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