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Competency-Based Education Network announces new cohort of member institutions

Thirteen institutions and two public systems representing 40 campuses join colleges and universities addressing shared challenges to designing, developing, and scaling high-quality competency-based degree programs

The [Competency-Based Education Network](#) (C-BEN) on Tuesday announced 15 new members. This cohort will join the network, supported by Lumina Foundation and managed by Public Agenda, on March 3 when the national group comprising a total of 30 institutions and four public systems with 82 campuses meets for a three-day working session in Austin.

Competency-based degree programs are promising approaches to helping educate more Americans, because they hold potential as a better way to plan, organize, deliver, and support education for students who are not well served by traditional academic instruction. C-BEN was formed a year ago in response to clear demand from colleges and universities that had been building competency-based models in isolation. Today, these leading institutions are working collaboratively to accelerate progress on shared challenges around program design and integrity, business processes and systems, and vendor relations to build models capable of scaling to serve many more students from all backgrounds.

C-BEN, which has become a major voice on federal student aid issues and innovative program design, will now include: **Central New Mexico Community College** in Albuquerque; **Concordia University** Wisconsin; **Danville (Va.) Community College**; **Davenport University** in Grand Rapids, Mich.; **Kentucky Commonwealth College** (a collaborative effort of Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education, the University of Louisville and Western Kentucky University); **Lord Fairfax Community College** in Virginia; **Los Angeles Trade-Technical College**; **Purdue University** at West Lafayette; **Rasmussen College**; **Southwestern College** in Winfield, Kan.; the **University of Michigan at Ann Arbor**; **Thomas Edison State College** in Trenton, N.J.; and **Walden University** (Laureate Education). In addition, C-BEN will add the **University System of Georgia** and the **University of Texas System**, which represent 40 campuses. Some of these institutions have been through the Next Generation Learning Challenges Business Model Incubator, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and are ready to begin working with the leading institutions.

During the past year, leading competency-based institutions have taken part in research-and-development efforts to develop evidence-based approaches that will advance high-quality competency-based education capable of serving students of all backgrounds. In November, C-BEN's Steering Committee issued a formal call for new members.

"We are thrilled with the continuing interest in our network's work and competency-based education," said C-BEN Chairwoman Laurie Dodge, vice chancellor of institutional assessment and planning at Brandman University in California. "This new group, as well as the institutions already involved, is

dedicated to accelerating model development in ways that also help inform the field. The new members of the network are high-caliber institutions, and we are look forward to working with them.”

The addition of new members will strengthen the network, allowing more work to be undertaken in areas such as defining quality program outcomes and learning assessment, understanding which students are likely to benefit from emerging models, and establishing standards for back-office processes and systems affecting registrars, financial aid officers, and commercial vendors. Additional support from Lumina will support more frequent and detailed reporting out of findings and will enable work to continue through mid-2017 to give the network time and support to identify options for sustaining itself.

Changing student populations and calls for affordability and innovation in higher education have heightened interest among colleges and universities in developing competency-based degree programs. Since late 2012, more than 200 institutions have expressed interest in developing or implementing competency-based degree programs.

Learn more about C-BEN at: www.cbenetwork.org

About Public Agenda

Public Agenda is a nonprofit organization that helps diverse leaders and citizens navigate divisive and complex issues. Through nonpartisan research and engagement, it provides people with the insights and support they need to arrive at workable solutions on critical issues, regardless of their differences. Since 1975, Public Agenda has helped foster progress on K-12 and higher education reform, health care, federal and local budgets, energy and immigration.

About Lumina Foundation

Lumina Foundation is an independent, private foundation committed to increasing the proportion of Americans with high-quality degrees, certificates and other credentials to 60 percent by 2025. Lumina’s outcomes-based approach focuses on helping to design and build an accessible, responsive and accountable higher education system while fostering a national sense of urgency for action to achieve Goal 2025.

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