

# A Targeted Approach to PLA

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# The plan for our time together

- Introductions
- Brief definition of/basic info about PLA
- Models for evaluating PLA
- North Park process
- Participant experiences
- Questions/conversation

# Introductions

- Name
- Institution and position
- Involvement with PLA

# A definition to begin...

- As defined by ACE (American Council on Education): Academic credit granted for demonstrated college-level equivalencies gained through learning experiences outside of the college classroom, using one of the well-established methods for assessing extra-institutional learning, including third party validation of formal training, or individualized assessment, such as portfolios <sup>1</sup>

# Why is it important?

- CAEL study of 48 higher education institutions and 62,000 students found that learners with PLA credit had better academic outcomes, including better graduation rates. <sup>2</sup>
- There is a perceived mismatch between what employers need and what traditional education is providing. <sup>3</sup>

But...

- Students expressed frustration with the lack of clear information on the process. <sup>4</sup>

# Models/Methods of PLA

- Portfolio review – individualized and reviewed by their institution
- Standardized exams – CLEP, DSST, etc.
- Third party evaluations – ACE, CAEL
- Individualized assessment – language skills, hands on ability
- Institutional equivalency exams

# PLA in Action at NPU

- History of PLA at School of Adult Learning
  - From 92 – 96 total of 62 students with an average of 5.67 credit hours per project
  - From 10 – 14 total of 244 students with an average of 7.00 credit hours per project
- Types of PLA available
  - Exams – CLEP, BYU language, etc.
  - ACE evaluated and military transcripts
  - Written Projects

# PLA in Action at NPU

- Student focused
  - Information available to students
  - Meeting with PLA Coordinator
  - What type of project
  - Who is involved and when
  - Costs and transcribing



# Participant experiences

What have been your experiences with PLA?

# Questions and Conversation



**THANKS FOR BEING HERE TODAY!**

Lives of Significance and Service  
**NORTH PARK**  
**UNIVERSITY**  
CHICAGO

# End Notes and References

- <sup>1</sup> Lakin, Mary Beth, et. al. 2015. *Credit for Prior Learning: Charting Institutional Practice for Sustainability*. Washington, DC: American Council on Education.
- <sup>2</sup> Klein-Collins, Rebecca. 2010. *Fueling the Race to Postsecondary Success: A 48-Institution Study of Prior Learning Assessment and Adult Student Outcomes*. Council for Adult and Experiential Learning.
- <sup>3</sup> *What America Needs to Know about Higher Education Redesign*. 2014. (Lumina Foundation and Gallup).  
<http://www.luminafoundation.org/resources/what-america-needs-to-know-about-higher-education-redesign>
- <sup>4</sup> Ryu, Mikung. 2013. *Credit for Prior Learning: From the Student, Campus, and Industry Perspectives*. Washington, DC: American Council on Education.