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Higher Education Regional Alliance launches microcredential portal to connect professionals with new skills

User-friendly digital catalog showcases more than 120 certification and badge programs from Milwaukee region higher education institutions to address employers' upskilling needs

MILWAUKEE (February 28, 2023) – To help address Southeastern Wisconsin employers' urgent need to provide new skills to their employees, the [Higher Education Regional Alliance](#) (HERA) today announced the launch of a [microcredential portal](#). This new tool will help professionals who are already in the workforce, along with current students, easily find certification and badge programs across HERA institutions that provide in-demand skills for career advancement.

The launch of this portal is the latest contribution from HERA, a collective force of 18 public and private, two- and four-year colleges and universities and a network of partner organizations in the region that are collaborating to have an even greater impact on students and support the region's economy.

"When we talk to employers, one of the most persistent and urgent themes that consistently emerges is the importance of upskilling," said Dr. John Walz, president of Milwaukee School of Engineering and HERA member. "Having a wide range of skills-based credential programs is critical to our region's competitiveness, both today and in the future. With the launch of this portal, HERA is supporting our region's employers and their employees by making it easier to connect with programs that offer in-demand skills."

The portal provides easily searchable access to more than 120 certification and badge programs offered at HERA institutions, including credentials in the areas of business, education, healthcare, leadership and technology. Programs are available in a wide variety of formats, ranging from in-person to virtual and hybrid. With some programs as short as a few weeks to some lasting several months, offerings are designed to fit the unique scheduling needs of working professionals.

According to a recent survey by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), 68 percent of students who currently hold an alternative credential believe earning it has helped them progress in their careers. The survey also found 79 percent of executives, 74 percent of supervisors and 55 percent of HR professionals agree alternative credentials can increase their organization's ability to hire more diverse candidates.

"The launch of HERA's microcredential portal is a great example of how higher education institutions can collaborate to innovate and make education more accessible to our community," said Dr. Phyllis King, Associate Vice Chancellor and Vice Provost for Partnerships & Initiatives at the University of

Wisconsin-Milwaukee. “At UWM, we’ve heard firsthand from students how such programs can impact their career growth. Employers also have shared the many benefits these programs can have on employee recruitment and retention efforts.”

Microcredentials are an emerging trend in higher education, repurposing the robust educational expertise of academic institutions into shorter, more focused programming that can better meet the needs of working professionals and fit their schedules. This programming is intended as a supplement to traditional two-year, four-year and graduate degrees, all of which continue to show outstanding value over the course of a student’s career after graduation. While member institutions have been developing their own unique microcredential offerings over the past several years, HERA is multiplying their value by bringing all of these offerings together into a one-stop shop.

For more information about HERA and its impact across the region, please visit: www.herawisconsin.org.

About the Higher Education Regional Alliance

The Higher Education Regional Alliance (HERA) is a talent producing collaboration among 18 southeastern Wisconsin public and private, two- and four-year colleges and universities and a network of partner organizations. We are dedicated to closing achievement gaps and educating students today to become an innovative and nimble workforce that meets the needs of the region’s industries tomorrow. This challenge is too large for any one university or college to solve alone, so we are working together. We know that education impacts more than individual lives; it can change the trajectory of our entire region. For more information, please visit www.herawisconsin.org.

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