

Micro- credential

FORUM 2024

Developing Tomorrow's Workforce



February 22, 2024
Online Presentations

The Micro-credential Forum is made possible with funding by the Ministry of Colleges and Universities.

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Welcome to eCampusOntario's

Micro-credential Forum 2024:

Developing Tomorrow's Workforce



Since 2017, eCampusOntario has brought together colleagues and changemakers in industry, government, and higher education to showcase the impacts of micro-credentials across the province and beyond.

The annual *Micro-credential Forum: Developing Tomorrow's Workforce* will explore how institutions, employers, and eCampusOntario are working together to develop new programs that position Ontario as the best place to recruit and retain workers.

Experts will provide insights for program laddering, credit pathways, and scaling micro-credential offerings through employer demand. This Forum will highlight successful partnerships between industry, community organizations, and post-secondary institutions, showcasing their work to empower trailblazers, improve learner experiences, and prepare the future workforce to thrive. We'll spotlight how the growing micro-credential ecosystem is working to meet the needs of learners, employers, and educators in a rapidly changing global economy.

About eCampusOntario

eCampusOntario is a not-for-profit organization that accelerates the transformation of postsecondary digital learning in Ontario to increase participation in higher education. With \$47 million in funding from the Province of Ontario in 2021, eCampusOntario leads a consortium of the province's publicly-assisted colleges, universities and Indigenous Institutes to advance the development and adoption of online and digital learning technologies, programs and environments.



Conference Tracks



Anticipating Labour Market Demands

How can micro-credentials equip learners with the skills needed to secure employment in high-growth industries?



Operationalizing and Scaling

How can educators secure resources and foster support to overcome implementation challenges, grow their programs, and get more graduates into jobs?



Building Partnerships

How can post-secondary institutions collaborate with industry and community organizations to co-create micro-credentials that are responsive to local needs?



Pathways and Laddering

How can micro-credentials interface with traditional credit systems and provide underserved groups with opportunities to continue lifelong learning?

Join us as we drive innovation in the higher education sector and work together to develop tomorrow's workforce. Together, we're getting people into programs, and then into jobs.



Featured Speakers



Renee Desmarchelier

**Associate Professor (Education and Humanities and Communication),
University of Southern Queensland**

Renee Desmarchelier has led micro-credentials at the University of Southern Queensland, Australia, from initial project to establishment of the University's Microcredential Unit. Renee's academic career has been interdisciplinary, starting in the sciences, moving into First Nations education and Critical Pedagogy, and then on to university-level Learning and Teaching leadership. The dynamic and challenging space of micro-credentials has been her area of speciality for the last three years where she has led the development of process, systems, projects, and government grants. Renee sees the potential of micro-credentials to broaden tertiary level education, providing access to lifelong and life-wide learning to non-traditional students.



A.J. Fraser

Senior Project Manager, Micro-credentials, Cape Breton University

A.J. Fraser is a Senior Project Manager at Cape Breton University (CBU), in Unama'ki-Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia, Canada, developing his institution's capacity to develop and deliver micro-credential programming. This innovative education model provides opportunities to accelerate recognized and validated skills development and CBU expertise in the community, with an aim to address identified socio-economic needs of Cape Breton and beyond. Informed by the university's strategic directive to "Champion the Island's Prosperity", CBU micro-credentials offer a targeted, accessible, and affordable learning option for working professionals, current students, and lifelong learners to engage in continuous education and be recognized for their newly acquired competencies and dedication to their field. A.J. also sees the increasing adoption of unified micro-credential definitions and frameworks as a way to bridge institutional divides and encourage partnerships in the adult education movement. A.J. has a BA, Celtic Culture, and an MBA, Community Economic Development, from Cape Breton University.



Bill Hughes

President and CEO, Education Design Lab

Bill Hughes is the President and CEO of Education Design Lab, a national nonprofit based in Washington, DC. The Lab engages learning institutions, employers, and regions using design thinking to unlock economic opportunity via skills-based pathways to and through quality jobs and careers. Before joining the Lab, he was the founder and CEO of JobReady (acquired by LearningMate). Previously, Hughes was Chief Strategy Officer at Learning Objects (acquired by Cengage) and led business development at Pearson. He co-founded Intellus Learning (acquired by Macmillan) and oversaw the transformation of Pearson's learning products into its flagship MyLab platform. Over the past 25 years, he has held leadership positions at Sapien, Mercer, and the Cambridge Innovation Center. In addition, he was a member of the board of trustees of Kaplan University that became Purdue University Global. Hughes currently serves as a board member of Berkshire Bank (NYSE: BHLB) and Education Development Center.



Online Presentation Agenda

Time	Session
12:00 pm – 1:00 pm EST	<p>Partnerships Hour:</p> <p>Embracing Partnerships and Collaboration with Industry Experts to Develop Meaningful Micro-credentials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jennifer Mosley, MAEd, eLearning Manager, eLearning Post-Graduate Coordinator & Associate Faculty, Sault College <p>Future Skills for Small Economies: Insights from a 'Reflexive' Partnership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Michelle Gruda, Learning Solutions Designer, University of Toronto School of Continuing Studies• Ajmal Sataar, Founder & CEO, Small Economy Works & The Inspire Program
3:00 pm – 4:00 pm EST	<p>Panel Discussion:</p> <p>Partnerships, Programs, and Pathways: Global Perspectives on Micro-credential Development</p> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Renee Desmarchelier, Associate Professor (Education and Humanities and Communication), University of Southern Queensland• A.J. Fraser, MBA, Senior Project Manager, Micro-credentials, Cape Breton University• Bill Hughes, President and CEO, Education Design Lab <p>Moderator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Michael Chrobok, Micro-credentials Program Lead, eCampusOntario



Session Abstracts

12:00 pm - 1:00 pm EST: Partnerships Hour

Embracing Partnerships and Collaboration with Industry Experts to Develop Meaningful Micro-credentials

This session aims to raise awareness of the importance of working in partnership and collaboration with industry experts to design and deliver meaningful, relevant, and accessible online, self-directed micro-credentials. The presentation will highlight partnerships Sault College has developed to support the creation of industry-relevant learning opportunities for employees and clients: Project Learning Tree & Sustainable Forestry Initiative (Indigenous ways of knowing and forestry); Ontario Lottery & Gaming (customer service training); Charity Village Canada (leading not-for-profit organizations); Infratech (AutoCAD); and WoundPedia (skin and wound care). By securing partnerships like these with industry experts, designers and developers within colleges and universities can ensure they are developing micro-credentials that accurately reflect an industry's current training needs, skills, and knowledge. By partnering and collaborating with industry experts, colleges and universities can better understand the curriculum required to prepare individuals entering these professions; this helps to ensure that the individuals completing these micro-credentials are equipped to secure relevant job opportunities. With valuable input, feedback, and industry expertise and guidance, colleges and universities can feel confident that what they are designing and delivering supports the development of tomorrow's workforce.

- **Jennifer Mosley, MAEd**, eLearning Manager, eLearning Post-Graduate Coordinator & Associate Faculty, Sault College

Future Skills for Small Economies: Insights from a 'Reflexive' Partnership

In a unique partnership model, our organizations collaborated to co-create a suite of micro-credentials with a focus on entrepreneurial leadership skills for rural, remote, and Northern learners. Drawing on the strengths and expertise of each partner, we embarked on a learner-centred, iterative design process that resulted in three new micro-credential offerings. Each provides a culturally responsive, holistic learning experience aligned to in-demand competencies and skills that enable participants to succeed and grow in their professional and entrepreneurship journeys. This presentation will highlight key lessons from our 'reflexive' partnership approach, as well as learner feedback and insights from recent cohorts that continues to inform the evolution of this micro-credential program.

- **Michelle Gruda**, Learning Solutions Designer, University of Toronto School of Continuing Studies
- **Ajmal Sataar**, Founder & CEO, Small Economy Works & The Inspire Program



Session Abstracts (Continued)

3:00 pm - 4:00 pm EST: Panel Discussion

Partnerships, Programs, and Pathways: Global Perspectives on Micro-credential Development

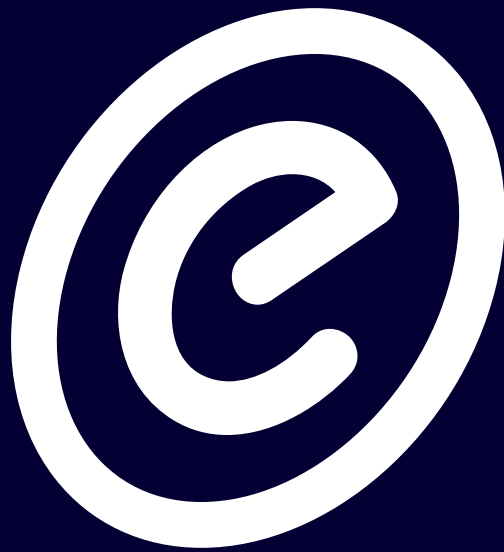
Bringing together higher education thought leaders from Australia, Canada, and the United States, this panel explores the power of micro-credentials to remove barriers, promote career and community development, and expand access to lifelong and life-wide learning. Panelists will shed light on questions such as: How can micro-credentials provide learning and career pathways for non-traditional students, including groups who have historically faced barriers to post-secondary education? How can critical workforce demands, including those in rural regions, be met through responsive micro-credentials that are built in partnership with communities and employers? Drawing on their experience with program creation and management at various scales, panelists will also share practical advice for educators and industry professionals interested in developing micro-credentials in collaboration for the first time.

Panelists:

- **Renee Desmarchelier**, Associate Professor (Education and Humanities and Communication), University of Southern Queensland
- **A.J. Fraser, MBA**, Senior Project Manager, Micro-credentials, Cape Breton University
- **Bill Hughes**, President and CEO, Education Design Lab

Moderator:

- **Michael Chrobok**, Micro-credentials Program Lead, eCampusOntario



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